

Pluck and Luck

COMPLETE STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post Office, by Frank Tousey.

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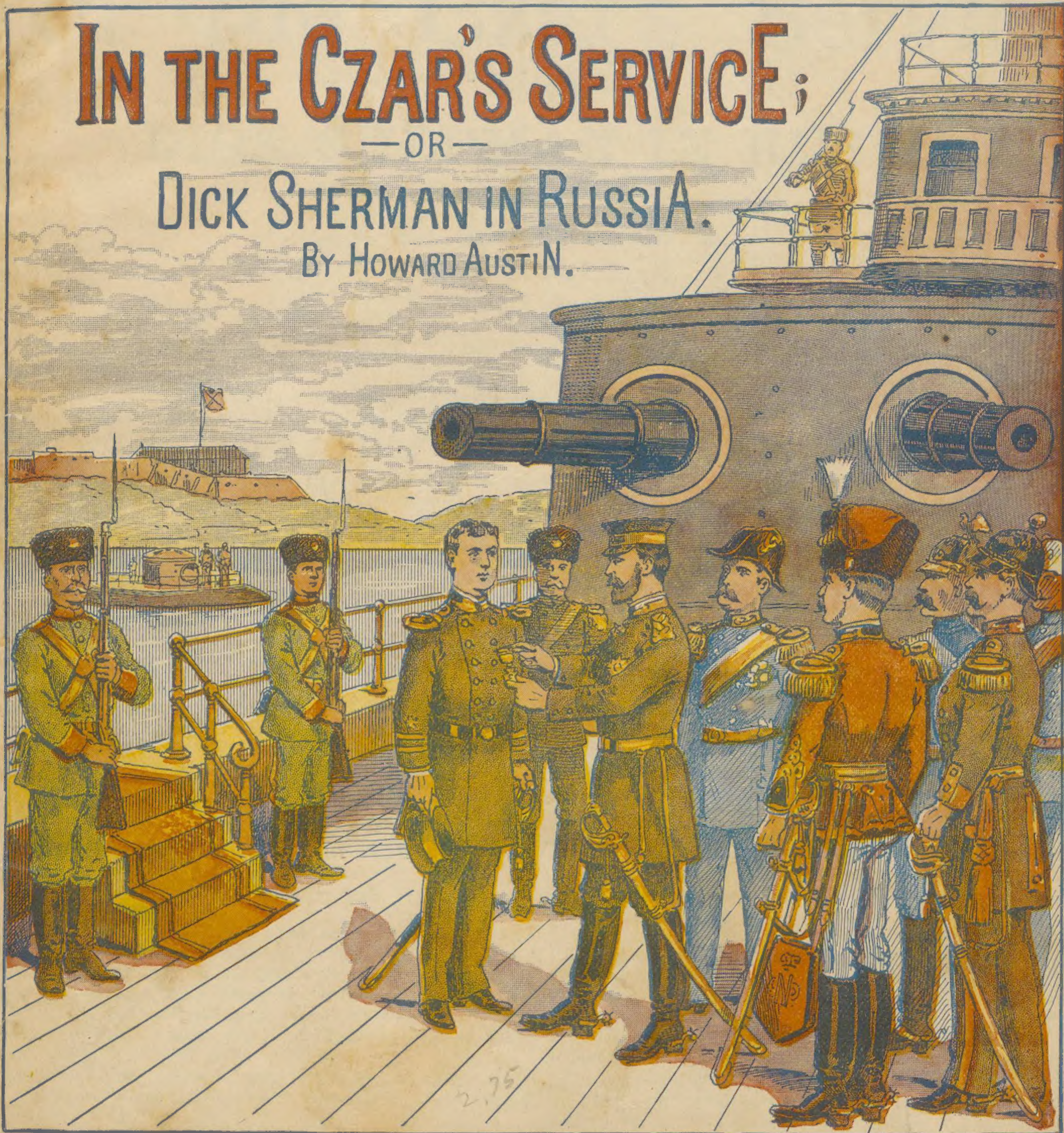
Price 5 Cents.

IN THE CZAR'S SERVICE;

—OR—

DICK SHERMAN IN RUSSIA.

By HOWARD AUSTIN.



The czar and war minister were on deck, surrounded by a brilliant staff. When Dick went aboard the ship he was congratulated and complimented on all sides. The czar received him graciously and conferred the Iron Cross of Ivan on him, which made him the equal of any nobleman in Russia.

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CHAPTER I.

DICK SHERMAN—THE CZAR'S OFFER.

IN one of the finest residences on Long Island lived Angus Sherman, the blind inventor, with his wife, son and daughter-in-law. He was very wealthy, having amassed an immense fortune out of the proceeds of his numerous inventions.

His son Dick bade fair to rival his aged father as an inventor. His name was now familiar to scientists in both Europe and America, though he was yet but one-and-twenty years of age.

His young wife, Lylah, had been his father's ward, and he married her on shipboard in the Indian ocean some two years previous to the opening of our story. They had come home to live with the aged and blind inventor, and were as happy a couple as could be found anywhere in the world.

Being possessed of ample wealth, young Dick Sherman did not have the incentive to work out the inventive talent he had inherited from his father. Yet he could not resist the temptation to linger in the famous old workshop where his father had solved so many difficult mechanical problems.

One day there came to the elegant residence of the Shermans a stranger of distinguished appearance, who, on being admitted, asked to see the young inventor in person.

Dick soon entered the reception-room, where the stranger arose and made a profound bow to him.

"Have I the honor of addressing Mr. Richard Sherman?" the man asked.

"That is my name, sir," said Dick. "Please be seated, and tell me wherein I can serve you."

"My name is Count Katzkoff. I am the Russian consul-general at New York," said the man, tendering his card.

"I am very happy to meet you, count," replied Dick, making a very profound bow to his distinguished visitor.

"I have been instructed by the government of the czar," said the consul-general, "to call on you in person and offer you a captain's commission in the naval service of Russia."

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Dick, in unfeigned astonishment. "I never belonged to a navy in my life—never was on board a man-of-war even."

"Nevertheless, his majesty makes you the offer, with the right for you to select your own assistant, who will also receive a commission of lieutenant."

"But I don't understand this," said Dick, more puzzled than ever.

"You were once in Russia, were you not?" the count asked.

"Yes, two years ago, when I sold to the czar the torpedo-boat, Little Wonder."

"Well, the czar wants you to take command of the Little Wonder, as there is no man in Russia competent to handle her properly."

"Why, where is Yasoff? He was in command of her when I left her."

"He was killed in a duel three months ago, since which time the Little Wonder has been lying idle in the Neva."

"Yasoff dead! Killed in a duel! Poor Yasoff! He was a brave, generous, warm-hearted fellow. I am very sorry to hear of his sad death," and Dick was profoundly moved by what he has just heard.

But he had little time to grieve.

The representative of the czar was before him, awaiting his answer.

"Will you permit me to ask you a few questions, count," he asked, "before giving an answer to the offer of the czar?"

"With pleasure, sir. I have been instructed to give you all the information you may ask for in regard to the offer."

"Well, what is the nature of the service required of me while in command of the Little Wonder?"

"You are to receive all your instructions from the czar and none else; to defend the empire always against all foes of whatever description or nationality."

"That is the duty of everyone in the czar's service," remarked Dick. "Is Russia going to war with any European power at present?"

"No. Her relations with Europe are of the most amicable character. There is not even a question under discussion with any nation."

"Then there must be some special service required of me?"

"Perhaps. The czar regards the Little Wonder as the most valuable vessel in the Russian Navy. There have been several efforts made to destroy her."

"By whom?"

"Ostensibly by Nihilists; but it is believed in St. Petersburg that large sums of money have been offered in certain quarters to procure the destruction of the vessel."

"Yes, I can understand that. Do you think that any other service will be required of me?"

"Perhaps you will be required to explore the bottom of the ocean in certain localities near the coast of the Black Sea."

"The Black Sea!"

"Yes, the Black Sea."

"But it will not be allowed to pass through the Bosphorus."

"We shall not talk about that now. You will reach the Black Sea, however."

"How long does the czar want me to remain in his service?"

"Just as long as you desire."

"Shall I be allowed to leave whenever I desire to do so?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Do you say that I shall be allowed to choose my own assistant?"

"Yes, and all your crew besides, only the czar will require that an officer whom he will select shall go with you, but always subject to your orders, in order to be able to command the boat in case you should leave or an accident happen to you."

"Very well. I think I understand you now. I'll give you an answer in a few days after I have consulted my wife and my father."

"Thanks. May I ask if you regard the czar's offer in a favorable light?"

"Yes. I am very favorably impressed by it."

"Thanks, sir. I shall await your reply with a great deal of interest, not to say suspense."

"I shall not delay giving you an answer any longer than I can possibly help."

Dick then ordered a servant to bring in some wine for the visitor, and during the time the count remained he asked him many questions in regard to certain persons in Russia.

The count answered his queries as well as he could.

"Have you ever heard of a certain Jack Lawler, an American, who was in St. Petersburg at the same time that I was?"

"I do not recollect ever having heard of him," was the reply.

"Why do you ask?"

"Because he tried very hard to either capture or destroy the Little Wonder at the time, and I had reason to suspect him of being in the employ of the British government."

"Ah! The same impression exists in St. Petersburg to-day, and he may be at the bottom of certain attempts to destroy the boat. But still I do not recollect hearing the name."

In a little while the count left, and Dick at once sought his father to lay before him the offer that had been made him.

The old man was elated at the news.

"My dear son," he said, "I would advise you to accept the offer by all means."

"But I should have to separate myself from my wife and son for a year or two," said Dick.

"Not necessarily," said the grand old man. "She could visit the Russian capital, and her presentation at court would be very gratifying to her. I have reason to believe that the czar will afford you an opportunity not only to add to your fortune, but your fame also. You are young—just on the threshold of your manhood—and should not neglect an opportunity to distinguish yourself and leave a name for your son to be proud of."

"But I may have the chance to do that in my own country, father," suggested Dick, who really did not care to go so far away from his idolized wife and child.

"The United States has no need of your services just now," said the old man. "Make yourself useful to Russia, and if your country needs you she will call for you. My advice to you is to accept the offer. Your wife can go with you when you go, or join you at any time if you go without her."

Dick lost no time in consulting Lylah, the mother of his boy, and she surprised him by the amount of ambition she had.

"I would submit to anything for the sake of your interest," she said.

"But I do not need to go," said he. "I have enough for us to live on in affluence all our lives."

"Yes, so you have, but you will live and die here as plain Dick Sherman if you do not exert yourself. Who knows but you may become the head of the Russian Navy? The czar may make you one of the nobles of his empire, or——"

"I'd rather be an American citizen, every time," remarked our hero, very emphatically.

"But if you build up a great name abroad your fellow-citizens will honor you when you return."

"But you and the boy? I can't bear the idea of going so far away from you."

"Oh, don't flatter yourself that you will get away from us. We will go and come whenever the notion takes us. I am fond of traveling, you know, as we met in St. Petersburg and Calcutta. Oh, how I should like to stand on the very spot where I first met you in the Russian capital!"

"Then you really advise me to accept the czar's offer?"

"Yes, Dick, by all means. I have such faith in Father Sherman's good judgment that were he to advise you to locate in Central Africa I would say 'go,' and go with you cheerfully."

"Then I shall accept the offer."

"And you will then be Captain Richard Sherman," said Lylah, proudly.

"Yes, but if you ever call me anything but plain 'Dick' I'll resign and run away from you."

"You could never be anything else but Dick to me, you dear old boy!" and she gave him one of her old, loving glances, which never failed to set his heart in a flutter.

Before giving the Russian Consul an answer he resolved to see Harry Bolton, who was a book-keeper in a large business house in New York. He had not seen Harry for months, yet when the representative of the czar told him that his assistant should receive the commission and pay of a lieutenant in the Russian navy, he thought of him.

On reaching the store he called for Harry, and one of the clerks went back to notify the young book-keeper that a gentleman wished to see him.

Harry came forward to meet him.

"Hello, Dick!" he exclaimed on seeing the young inventor. "How are you, old man?"

"Never in better health, Harry," replied Dick, "and I am glad to see you looking well."

"Oh, I'm in splendid health," said Harry, laughing. "I'm in such robust health that I am afraid I shall not be able to get a vacation this season."

"Would you like to have a vacation, Harry?" Dick asked.

"Would a duck swim, Dick? Ask me a hard question."

"Well, just tender the firm your resignation and go with me. I'll give you a vacation for one, two, or three years."

"The deuce! Where are you going?"

"To Russia," and then Dick told him everything, ending by offering him a lieutenant's commission in the Russian navy.

Of course Harry accepted the offer, and said to his friend:

"Let the commission be sent to me here at the store. I want the proprietor to see it."

Dick looked surprised.

Harry whispered in his ear:

"He has a daughter, and I have a rival in the person of the head salesman. That commission will knock the salesman out in one round."

Dick laughed and said:

"I'll do it, old man. Keep quiet till the commission arrives," and then he shook hands with him and left the store.

Harry went back to his desk and resumed his work as though nothing had occurred to set his heart fluttering in eager anticipation.

CHAPTER II.

OUR HERO ARRIVES IN ST. PETERSBURG.

On leaving Harry Bolton our hero repaired to the office of the consul-general of Russia.

He was fortunate enough to find him in, and was received with distinguished consideration.

"Count," he said, "I have come to say to you that I have decided to accept the commission the czar has done me the honor of offering to me."

"Permit me to congratulate you, Captain Sherman," said the count, shaking his hand cordially. "The czar is one of the best monarchs man ever served. You will find him generous in his way,

and if you should be so fortunate as to win his favor your fame and fortune would be made."

"You tell me that which I already know, count," said Dick, "for I had the honor of a personal interview with him once. But you called me captain. When will the commission be issued?"

"The blanks are already signed. Only the names and date are needed. They were forwarded to me so that there should be no delay in the matter."

"Let me see them, please."

They were shown him, and he took the one for the lieutenant, and laying it before the count, said:

"Make out that one in the name of Harry Bolton. He is the man I want. I can trust him with my life at any time."

The count took up his pen, and wrote the name of Harry Bolton in the places that had been left blank for that purpose.

He also filled out the commission for Dick by inserting his name in the blank places.

Dick then requested the count to deliver Harry's commission to him in person, and he agreed to do so.

Dick then went back home with his commission in his pocket, and at once began to make preparations to leave America for Russia.

Two days later Harry came over to see him.

He was in high spirits.

He had his commission with him.

"The Russian Consul came in his carriage and asked for me," he said, "and when I met him he handed me the commission, with a neat little speech, and asked my formal acceptance of it. I accepted it with thanks, and the consul then re-entered his carriage and was driven away."

"It was a surprise to them in the store, was it not?" Dick asked.

"It knocked 'em all out. The proprietor was the most surprised of all. He took the commission and looked it over carefully. He didn't know that I had ever been in Russia, and when I told him that I had once before been in the czar's service he was more astonished. The head salesman is all broke up, for I went up to the young lady's house last night and showed her my commission. She is delighted, and declares that she will wait three years for me to claim her."

"Good! you made a good hit," said Dick, laughing. "I hope you may win fame and fortune to lay at her feet."

"I will if I can. When are you going to start for Russia?"

"In ten days. Can you get ready in that time?"

"Yes—in ten hours, if necessary."

"Well, be on hand in ten days, and we will take a steamer for Liverpool."

"I'll be on hand," said Harry, and then they parted for the day.

Dick lost no time in hunting up a good cook, who would act as a trusty steward also.

After a long search he found one who had sailed for a dozen years, and knew all about a sea cook's duties.

Scipio was as black as the ace of spades, about forty years of age, short, thick-set, and strong as a full-grown mule.

He had been shipwrecked in the South Pacific, and had just landed with his captain on a vessel which had rescued them. He had traveled in countries and climates, and had a wonderful facility for picking up a new language. The captain said he could make himself understood in a dozen tongues, and recommended him as strictly honest, and as faithful as a dog.

Dick made a bargain with him at once to remain there till he was ready to start for Russia.

Scipio took a great fancy to the young captain at once, and showed him how well he could cook by going into the kitchen and preparing a meal for the family. The regular cook was astonished, and the family were delighted.

The ten days were soon passed, and then the parting with friends and relations came.

Harry and Scipio were promptly on hand, the latter taking entire charge of the two young officers' baggage.

Nothing of interest occurred to them on the trip to St. Petersburg, where they arrived in due time, each having letters of introduction to the czar from the Russian consul-general at New York.

Dick lost no time in reporting to the Secretary of the Navy, who welcomed him and Harry with a cordiality that was very gratifying.

"When can we pay our respects to his majesty?"

"I shall inform him of your arrival," said the minister, "and he will appoint an hour for your presentation."

Dick and Harry returned to their hotel to await a message from the minister.

There were quite a number of English and a few Americans at the hotel. But as our heroes had registered their names simply as Dick Sherman and Harry Bolton, of New York, no one took any particular notice of them.

They were seated in the reception room of the hotel when an officer of the czar's household, in a brilliant uniform, came in and inquired for them.

The proprietor of the hotel pointed them out to the officer, who approached and made known his errand to Dick.

"We are at your service, sir," said Dick, rising.

"Be so kind as to accompany me, then," said the officer.

They followed him out to a carriage bearing the imperial coat-of-arms, and in a few minutes they were being whirled away in the direction of the czar's palace.

Passing through a host of soldiers and sentries, our heroes were shown into a room in the palace, where they were told to sit till the czar was ready to receive them.

They did not have to wait long ere an officer came in and whispered a few words to their guide, who motioned to them to follow him.

In another room they found the czar seated at a table covered with papers and maps.

Dick recognized him at a glance.

He made a profound bow and said:

"Sire, I have come at your request to enter your service."

The czar recognized him quickly, extended his hand to him, saying:

"I am glad to see you, Captain Sherman, and give you a cordial welcome to Russia. I regret that I have not been able to induce more of your countrymen to enter my service."

"Thanks, sire," said Dick. "Of all the monarchs of Europe, the American people have the kindest feelings toward the czar of all the Russias."

"I have been told that by the American minister," said the czar, looking toward Harry, who had not yet spoken.

Dick presented Harry, and the czar took him by the hand, saying:

"You are welcome to Russia. I have implicit confidence in both of you. In a few days you will receive full instructions as to your duties, and an officer will place you in command of the wonderful boat, of which you are already familiar."

After giving Dick some very secret instructions the czar dismissed him, and he and Harry returned to the hotel, where the English and American guests crowded around them to ask questions.

"We are here to enter the service of the czar," replied Dick, in answer to a perfect shower of questions.

"In what capacity?" an Englishman asked.

"That is our business," said Dick, at which the Englishman took a drop on himself and vanished.

A few days later our heroes were dressed in the uniforms of their rank, and dashing-looking young officers they were, too.

The day they donned their uniforms they were shown to their charge, the "Little Wonder."

It was lying in the Neva, alongside of a huge Russian man-of-war.

Dick's eyes fairly danced with joy as he beheld the famous little wonder.

"There she is, Harry," he exclaimed.

"Yes, that's her—God bless her," said Harry.

They entered a boat and were rowed out to the man-of-war.

Scipio had been on board two days, and had everything in apple-pie order when they arrived.

He gave them the salute when they entered through the trap-like door in the top of the turret, and remarked:

"Dis am de smallest ship I ebber sailed wid, cap'en."

"Yes, it's rather small," said Dick; "but it was built that way, you know."

"Yes, sah—s'pose it was," he replied, with a broad grin stretching across his black face. "An' it ain't growed none since it war built."

The Russian officer smiled at the remark and said:

"You are now in command of the boat, Captain Sherman. In a few days you will receive some instructions as to a course you are to pursue."

"I am at liberty to move to any locality I may think proper?" Dick asked.

"Yes—you are to follow your own judgment in all things. The czar is the only man in Russia who has any authority over you."

"Thanks," said Dick.

The officer then took leave, and Dick and Harry were left in charge of the Little Wonder.

They hastily examined every part of her machinery, and soon found that not a particle of electricity was stored for use.

The batteries were set to work to generate electricity for future use, and then Harry and Dick tested every valve, button, door and compartment, to see if they were in perfect order.

"She is all right, Harry," said Dick, after several hours of patient examination.

"Yes, I think so, too," returned Harry.

Scipio was then instructed in the use of every part of the machinery, after which he proceeded to prepare his first meal on board.

CHAPTER III.

THE NIHILISTS AT WORK—A TERRIBLE EXPLOSION.

THE next day after taking command of the Little Wonder Dick moved her about a mile up the river from where she had been nestling under the protection of the man-of-war.

He was much nearer to the great stores from which he was to receive his supply of provisions, of which he was to keep enough on board to last six months.

The provisions were brought out to the Little Wonder in large row-boats, and the men who did the work eyed her with no little curiosity.

Only the turret was exposed above the water, which looked like a huge black cheese box inverted.

Having received her supplies, Dick and Harry entered, lowered the turret till it fitted down so as to make the boat look like the back of an immense turtle, and then dropped down the river to a point about a mile below the man-of-war.

There he decided to cast anchor and wait for instructions from the palace.

"Dick," said Harry, the next day after they made their last move, "have you noticed how closely some ill-looking fellows have been watching us ever since we came on board the Little Wonder?"

"Yes; I noticed them from the beginning. They are Nihilists."

"The deuce!"

"Yes."

"So they are," put in Scipio.

"How do you know, Scip?" Harry asked.

Scipio grinned and said:

"I'se bin hyer afo', sah. I knows dem Ni'llists."

"Bad people, eh?" asked Dick.

"Yes, sah; dey is."

"Well, keep your weather eye open, Scipio, and don't let 'em get away with us. They told me that the Nihilists had been trying for two years to destroy the boat."

"Yes, sah."

When night came on Dick decided to take in a full supply of fresh air, and then go to the bottom of the Neva and sleep there till morning, as he had warned off at least a dozen boats filled with ugly, dangerous-looking fellows during the day.

Accordingly he touched the button that opened the door of the water-tight compartment, and in a little while the Little Wonder sank down to the bottom of the river.

The electric light was turned on, and through the glass-protected ports they could see thousands of astonished fish blinded by the glare.

"There are fish out there which I have never seen before," said Harry, after he had looked at the strange sights for some time.

"Yes, every latitude has its peculiar specimens," said Dick. "Down in the tropics you will see another kind altogether."

"I suppose so. It's a strange and interesting exhibition, though."

"Yes. The fish come up to see what the light is, and are blinded

by it. If we could reach out there we could take hold of them with impunity."

They spent several days in that particular spot, resting on the surface in the daytime and on the bottom at night, waiting for orders from the palace.

One night, as Harry was gazing at the many strange fish which had gathered there in the electric light, he saw three strange-looking monsters, not unlike human beings in shape, not ten feet away.

"Dick! Dick!" he called, quickly, "come here and look at these!"

Dick sprang to his side in a moment and gazed at the strange-looking objects.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed; "they are marine divers!"

"What?"

"Marine divers," repeated Dick, "and as marine divers don't work at night, this means something wrong. There! Look at that fellow! He has an ugly-looking knife in his hand. Another has something with a wire attached to it. Harry, by the great horn spoon, those fellows are Nihilists, trying to fasten dynamite bombs to the Little Wonder and blow her up!"

"Then we'd better get away from here at once, or else blow 'em up before they can do us any damage."

"We must move. If we exploded one of our own torpedoes the concussion might explode theirs, and blow us up, too. Turn off the electric light and I'll send her gliding through the mud a few fathoms, and then we'll rise to the top and see who they are."

Harry shut off the electric light very suddenly, and the spot was at once dark to pitchy blackness.

Dick touched the propelling button, and the black iron hull glided noiselessly away through the mud.

Two minutes later the pumps were set going, and the boat began to rise.

When it reached the surface Harry turned on the electric light, and not a hundred yards away they saw a row-boat with five men—dark, swarthy, bearded-looking fellows.

They were rapidly pulling something up from the bottom of the river.

"There they are," said Harry. "They are pulling the divers up."

"Yes, they are Nihilists," remarked Dick. "I'm going to capture them."

The Little Wonder was turned toward them, and rushed forward with full speed.

The movement seemed to demoralize the people in the boat, for they dropped the ropes by which they were pulling up the divers and seized the oars, whilst one man stood ready to throw bombs.

"He's going to throw a bomb!" cried Harry. "Look out! You don't know what mischief a bomb can do."

Dick was about to reverse the course of the Little Wonder when he was startled by the crack of one of the Winchester rifles, of which he had a dozen on board.

Scipio had fired it.

The bullet struck the bomb in the hand of the Nihilist in the boat, and a frightful explosion followed, destroying every soul on board, and tearing the boat to splinters.

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Dick, as he witnessed the terrible destruction that followed the explosion, "that is the end of those fellows."

"Dat's er fac'," said Scipio, with a broad grin on his black face. "I hit dat bomb, an' he got busted hisself."

"I should say he did," said Harry. "The whole business is busted."

"Just look at the lights along the river front, Harry," called Dick, to his comrade. "That explosion must have startled the whole city."

Lights flashed all along the river front, and the hoarse voices of officers were heard.

Soon boats came from the shore, and Scipio had to act as interpreter for Dick, who explained what had been done in as few words as possible.

"There are three more of them in diving suits down at the bottom of the river," he added.

"What are they after down there?" an officer asked.

"They went down to fasten bombs to the Little Wonder for the purpose of blowing her up."

"They have the bombs with them, then?"

"Yes."

The movements of the boats convinced Dick that those in command of them did not really want to draw up the three divers, because, when a Nihilist finds himself hemmed in so that escape is impossible, he is very apt to throw a bomb that, while it destroys his captors, always kills the thrower, too.

"The bombs are connected by wire with the shore somewhere," Dick said, and the search for the wires began.

The crowd kept increasing along the wharves, and the police had all they could do to keep the people back.

Suddenly a dull, smothered sound was heard, and the next moment the Little Wonder was overwhelmed by an immense column of water, which rose up alongside of her, and then dropped back on top of her.

CHAPTER IV.

THE EFFECT OF THE EXPLOSION.

THE immense column of water that rose perpendicularly above the Little Wonder and then fell back on top of her would have crushed an ordinary vessel.

But the Little Wonder was not an ordinary craft, and so she came to the surface again unharmed, to the astonishment of the police along the wharves.

"That ends the divers," said Dick, "for they were not drawn up by those in the boat."

"It came very near ending us, too," said Harry.

"Yes. If we had been two fathoms' length to the right we would have been blown up. It was indeed a narrow escape."

"I wonder if that explosion was an accident?" said Harry.

"That is hard to say. Those Nihilists are very desperate fellows, and frequently take desperate chances. Their friends at the other end of the wires may have blown them up to put them out of their misery, knowing they would perish after being left in the bottom of the river."

"Would they do that?" Harry asked, with a shudder.

"Yes. They frequently blow themselves up for the purpose of destroying somebody else."

"They must be desperate fellows indeed. Here come more boats with officers."

Dick looked toward the city and saw three more boats coming toward him.

In one of them was an officer in a brilliant uniform, who came alongside the Little Wonder.

Dick ascended to the roof of the turret and saluted him.

"What has happened?" the officer asked, returning Dick's salute.

"An attempt was made to blow up this craft," was the reply.

"Who made the attempt?"

"I don't know. There were eight men in the party."

"Where are they now?"

"I don't know. They are all dead, though."

A grim smile played round the mouth of the officer, who asked:

"Are you Captain Sherman?"

"Yes, that's my name."

"Will you kindly give me the particulars, captain?" the officer asked.

"Certainly. Will you come on board?"

"No—I haven't time."

Dick then told him how everything occurred.

"Can I see that black cook of yours?" the officer asked, when he heard how Scipio had put a bullet through the bomb as the Nihilist was about to throw it.

"Yes."

And Dick called to Harry to send Scipio up on deck.

Scipio came up, wondering what was wanted. There was a good-natured grin on his face as the officer thanked him in the name of the czar for what he had done.

"Dat's all right, sah," said Scipio. "I didn't think nuffin 'bout

de czar when I seed him gittin' up ter frow dat bomb. Dis hyer nigger ain't ready to git blowed up yet."

Dick and the officer laughed at the black's frankness, and knew that he had told the truth.

Self-preservation is the first law of nature the world over, although men sacrifice themselves for principle in all ages.

The officer saluted Dick and pushed off, and in a little while was landed at one of the wharves nearby.

Dick and Harry remained on the deck of the Little Wonder for over an hour watching the police searching for the wires.

Pieces of timber from the shattered boat floated against the Little Wonder, and a number of dead fish, some of which Scipio secured.

A great commotion on one of the wharves told that the wires had been found, and a strong guard was placed in charge of the wharf.

Dick and Harry then decided to drop anchor and spend the rest of the night on the surface of the water.

When morning came they found a strong guard of police in charge of the wharf to which the wires were attached.

They remained on board the Little Wonder till an officer came. He came direct from the czar, bearing a letter of thanks from the sovereign for their faithfulness and vigilance.

Dick and Harry then gave the officer such additional news as they had, showing him the pieces of timber which had come from the Nihilists' boat.

The explosions had caused intense excitement in the city, and all day long great crowds of people came down to the water front to get a glimpse of the wonderful torpedo-boat which could sleep under the water like a turtle.

Dick Sherman's name was in everybody's mouth before noon of that day.

The czar had spoken of him in praise, and that was the cue to everybody in or about the palace.

The friends of the czar sung his praises, and the grim Nihilists ground their teeth in silent rage and heaped bitter curses on his name as they heard it mentioned.

Dick could not read or speak a word of Russian. The few officers who had come to him spoke English, or he could not have understood them.

In the afternoon of that day an officer, a lieutenant of the Russian navy, came on board, bringing a letter from the Secretary of the Navy.

The lieutenant said as he presented the letter:

"My name is Ivanoff, lieutenant in the navy."

"Happy to meet you, lieutenant," said Dick. "Take a seat while I read this letter."

Ivanoff sat down and looked around at the little craft while Dick perused the letter.

The minister simply stated that Lieutenant Ivanoff had been selected to serve with him on board the Little Wonder, and that he would also act as interpreter for him when one was needed.

Dick introduced him to Harry, and showed him the berth he was to occupy on board.

The Russian was a young man of about five-and-twenty years of age. He came of a good family, which had recently been ennobled by the czar on account of gallant service rendered by the head of it.

Ivanoff was promptly instructed in the mode of working the craft, and he expressed his admiration in the strongest terms.

"You are the most talked of man in St. Petersburg to-day," he said to Dick. "And the Nihilists would give more to blow you up with this boat than destroy the government of the czar."

"Well, I am glad you have told me that," replied Dick. "I might have been careless some day."

"You may rest assured that they will never forgive you for what you have done. They are people who never forgive or forget."

"Well, I shall make sure that I don't forget, either," remarked Dick.

That night they sank the Little Wonder again, and the young Russian was astounded at the number of fish he saw by the aid of the electric light.

"I am sure that the czar would be glad to see this sight," he said, after gazing at the fish for a long time.

"I am sure that I should like very much to have him see it," remarked Dick, as he prepared to turn in for the night.

CHAPTER V.

THE MYSTERIOUS SENTENCE OF DEATH.

WHEN they awoke the next morning, the sun was just gilding the spires of the great city.

Dick looked at his watch and decided that it was time to go up to the surface and get some fresh air.

Accordingly he instructed Harry to ascend, and the pumps were set going at once.

In a few minutes the roof of the little black craft was above the surface of the water.

The turret was run up, and the three whites went out on top to look at the harbor.

"This is the most extraordinary boat I ever heard of," said Ivanoff.

"Yes; it's the only one of its kind that was ever built," said Dick.

"This sleeping on the bottom of the Neva is a new experience for me," remarked the Russian.

"Yes. I do that to avoid the necessity of keeping a sentinel on deck all night."

"But what would you do in deep water—say a thousand feet down?"

"Oh, we can stop at any depth we please. All we care for is to be out of the way of vessels."

That morning Dick was sent for to go to the palace, as the czar wanted to see him.

Dick brushed up and prepared to accompany the officer.

"Harry," he said, "let nobody come on board during my absence. You know what happened you once on account of not being careful enough. In Russia you want to be sure all the time."

"Dat's er fac'," said Scipio to himself, yet loud enough to be heard by the others.

"I shall not allow any one but yourself to come on board, Dick," said Harry, and Dick entered the boat with the officer.

On reaching the wharf they entered a carriage, and were driven rapidly away in the direction of the palace.

He was not kept long in waiting, but was shown into the private apartment where he had once before met the czar.

The czar received him cordially, and told him that he wanted to thank him for the service he had rendered in blowing up the Nihilists.

"Your gallant action shall not be forgotten," said he.

"Thanks, sire," responded Dick. "That your majesty is satisfied with my work is reward enough for me."

"I am more than satisfied, captain," said the czar. "I am very much pleased. The Minister of War desires to have you blow up an iron-clad vessel which has been condemned. You will receive instructions from him in regard to that matter," and then the czar told him that he had a secret service for him to perform after the experiment of blowing up the iron-clad.

Dick came away from the palace convinced that the czar was a superior man in many respects.

As he was leaving the palace, a number of court officers crowded around him to shake his hand.

His name was on everybody's lips, and all were eager to know him.

They regarded him as the coming favorite of the czar, and, of course, many of them wanted to have as many friends as possible at court.

When he entered the carriage he happened to put his hand in a pocket of his coat, and feeling a piece of folded paper there, pulled it out and examined it.

"The Supreme Council of the Nihilists of Russia have this day passed the sentence of death on Captain Richard Sherman, of the torpedo-boat Little Wonder."

By the SCRIBE."

That was all.

But it was enough.

The sentence of death!

It was not pleasant news to hear, no matter from what source it came.

Dick never flinched. He passed it to the officer who had conducted him to the czar, and asked:

"How did that get into my pocket?"

The officer read the note and turned pale as death.

"They are everywhere!" he gasped. "All through the palace and in every part of the empire."

"This must have been slipped into my pocket at the palace," said Dick, "for nowhere else has any one, save yourself, been near enough to me to do it."

"Of course," said the officer, who spoke excellent English. "They are found under the czar's plate in his breakfast, dining or supper-room sometimes."

"Then there are traitors in the royal household?"

"Yes; they are everywhere in Russia."

"The czar must live a very unpleasant existence," remarked Dick. The officer shrugged his shoulders.

"I'd rather be a plain American citizen," added Dick, "than wear a crown and live in the constant fear of death by violence."

"We have all got to die some time," suggested the officer.

"So we have, but one wants to let Providence appoint the time and way and not his enemies."

"You are now under the ban of the Nihilists as well as the czar," remarked the officer, looking over his shoulder at Dick.

"Yes, but I am in the czar's service, and expected to be in some sort of danger all the time. If they want to see what I can do, they can be accommodated at any time."

Dick alighted from the carriage on the wharf, entered a small boat in waiting, and was rowed out to the Little Wonder.

"Harry," he said, as soon as he was on board, "I am under sentence of death."

Harry turned deathly pale, and sank into a seat in speechless silence.

"What's der matter, cap'en?" Scipio asked.

"The Nihilists have passed the sentence of death on me, Scip."

Scipio grinned from ear to ear.

He understood the matter in a flash.

So did Harry, as soon as he heard the word Nihilist, and he sprang up, saying:

"I've half a mind to throw you overboard, Dick! You've scared a week's growth out of me!"

Ivanoff smiled, and asked:

"Haven't you attained your full growth yet, lieutenant?"

"No. An American is never fully grown till he is thirty years of age."

Dick laughed heartily, and putting the slip of Nihilist paper in his hand, said:

"There is the sentence. I don't know when they purpose executing it, but we want to be on the lookout for them."

"Where did you get it, Dick?" Harry asked.

"It was slipped into my pocket in the palace."

"In the palace?"

"Yes. I found it in my pocket when I came out from the interview with the czar."

"They are bold fellows," Harry remarked, looking at the paper. "Whoever wrote this knows how to wield a pen. He is an educated person."

"Oh, some of the worst Nihilists in Russia," remarked Ivanoff, "belong to the nobility. Many army officers also belong to them."

"Why are they not punished?"

"Because they are not known. No mercy is shown them when they are discovered."

"What is done with them?"

"Siberia or death," replied Ivanoff, "and the terms are almost synonymous."

That afternoon an officer from the office of the Minister of War called and gave him a sealed letter.

Dick opened it, and in it were instructions which were to be followed strictly.

At a certain hour the next day, the Little Wonder was to start up the Neva to a certain point off the Navy Yard, and blow up an immense iron-clad vessel, which would be found anchored well out in the stream.

Dick immediately communicated his instructions to Harry and Ivanoff.

"Ah! you will have an opportunity to work under the eye of the czar now, captain," said the Russian officer.

"Do you think the czar will be present at the experiment?" our hero asked.

"I am sure of it," was the reply.

"Then we must be doubly cautious in all our movements," said Dick. "Harry, look after the torpedoes, and make sure of the best one in the lot. We'll blow that iron-clad sky-high, and then let her drop to the bottom."

CHAPTER VI.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE IRON-CLAD—DICK IS DECORATED BY THE CZAR AND—CAPTURED.

THAT night our hero made a personal examination of the torpedo that was to be used the next day. In company with Harry and Ivanoff he went back to the little compartment where the dangerous explosives were kept in rubber-cushioned cases to prevent concussion, and there made the selection of the one to be used.

It was marked and put aside, to be attached and placed in position the next day.

That matter attended to, our heroes quietly waited for the hour of retiring.

The sun was sinking below the horizon, and Dick, Harry and Ivanoff were out on the turret smoking cigars and looking at the shipping in the port.

Two row-boats were seen coming out from a pier some little distance above the spot where the Little Wonder lay.

For a time they appeared to be pulling together, but as they neared the Little Wonder one of them sheered off to the left, as if to pass by on that side.

Dick gazed indifferently at them for a minute or two, taking no special notice of them till he saw them suddenly turn and pull in opposite directions.

Then for the first time he noticed that the two boats were connected by a wire, and that the pulling in opposite directions would bring it almost to the surface of the water—certainly against the Little Wonder as soon as it was brought in range.

The peculiarity of the incident struck him as meaning danger, and he sung out to Scipio, who was down below preparing supper:

"Quick, Scipio! Back out into the middle of the stream!"

"Yes, sah!" came from below, and at the same moment the Little Wonder began to move backward.

The wire came so close to the prow of the boat, however, that Dick turned pale as death, and leaped from the turret to the hull, running forward knee-deep in the water.

"What's the matter, Dick?" Harry asked, not dreaming of the danger that threatened them.

Dick did not make him any reply till he was sure the danger was passed, and then, as the boat moved away from the wire, he said:

"Matter enough. If that wire had touched the boat we would have been blown to atoms."

Harry and Ivanoff held their breaths in consternation.

Neither of them could see where the danger was.

"That wire is connected with an electric battery," said Dick, "and a single shock would have exploded every torpedo on board the Little Wonder."

"Good Lord!" gasped Harry, pale as death. "How do you know that, Dick?"

"Why should they want to drag that wire over us save to destroy us?" Dick asked. "They could not harm us that way except by giving us an electric shock."

Ivanoff gazed at the men in the two boats, who were now pulling away for dear life, having thrown the electric batteries overboard in their efforts to escape.

"Will you let them get away?" he asked, as Dick climbed back up on the turret.

"No," he replied. "We'll run 'em both down. Come below."

They followed him below and saw him take charge of the Little Wonder and send her flying after the row-boat nearest to her.

The Nihilists—five in number—were pulling for dear life. Perspiration rolled off their swarthy faces as they bent to the oars.

But the terrible torpedo-boat was after them, and in another minute it struck them.

Their boat was shattered to splinters and the men sent flying into the water.

Dick mercilessly struck first one and then the other till four out of the five men had gone to the bottom of the Neva.

The fifth man caught on to the torpedo-boat and climbed up on the turret.

"He is safe there," said Dick, "till we want to take him in out of the wet. Now for the other boat."

The Little Wonder then gave chase to the second Nihilist boat. But the crew escaped up to the pier, under which they plunged, making their escape like rats running into their holes.

The Little Wonder could not follow under the pier, and so had to back off from it.

Just then the man up on the turret sprang into the water, and ere anything could be done to prevent him he had swam under the pier and was safe from the torpedo-boat with his comrades.

Of course the affair caused intense excitement, and in a very short time a great crowd collected on the docks and piers.

The police worked manfully, but did not succeed in capturing any of the villains who had sought refuge under the pier. They continued in their efforts, however, to solve the mystery of their sudden disappearance.

In the meantime, Dick resolved to hunt on the bottom of the river for the wire the Nihilists had thrown overboard. He put on his diving-suit and went out on the hunt.

When he found it, which he did after a patient search, he felt along till he came to an immense bomb attached to it.

"Good Heavens!" he exclaimed. "This would have utterly destroyed us, boat and all!"

He brought it in as a relic, and put it with the torpedoes.

The next morning, with torpedo in position, he prepared to move up the river in quest of the iron-clad which had been described to him.

When they had gone about five miles they saw the huge vessel lying low in the water a mile off.

About a quarter of a mile to the left was another large steamer, which seemed to be manned as if for a special occasion.

"I think the czar is on that vessel," said Ivanoff, "waiting to see the explosion."

"If he is he'll see something that will put him in a good humor," said Dick. "For I am going to send that iron-clad to the bottom so quickly that they won't know what has happened."

With that the turret was lowered, and the Little Wonder sank below the surface some twenty feet. Then she sped on toward the great iron-clad with unerring aim.

When within a few fathoms of the doomed vessel Dick made sure of the mark and then let the torpedo go.

It struck directly under the center of the vessel and exploded with a report like the bursting of a subterranean volcano.

The enormous mass lifted several feet, but not out of the water. Her entire bottom was torn to pieces, however, and she went down just like a great mass of iron would have been expected to do.

The triumph of the Little Wonder was complete. So was the destruction of the iron-clad, and that was the object sought.

Dick sent the Little Wonder to the surface, and was making his way down the river again, when he was signaled by the vessel which stood out on the left to approach.

He did so, and Ivanoff soon discovered the czar and war minister on deck, surrounded by a brilliant staff.

When Dick went aboard the ship he was congratulated and complimented on all sides.

The czar received him graciously and conferred the Iron Cross of Ivan on him, which made him the equal of any nobleman in Russia.

But Dick did not dream of the extent of the honor done him, and came away highly delighted with the success of his work and the evident appreciation of the czar.

An exclamation of surprise burst from Ivanoff when he caught sight of the iron cross pinned on the lapel of Dick's coat.

"What's the matter?" asked Dick.

"That cross," said he. "You are a lucky man, Captain Sherman."

"Why, what is it, anyhow, and what does it mean?"

"It is the Iron Cross of Ivan, and makes the wearer of it the equal of any nobleman in the empire."

"Great Yankee Doodle!" exclaimed Dick, in gleeful amazement. "The czar seemed well pleased when he gave it to me."

"He never confers it except on his favorites," remarked Ivanoff. "Thousands of men have lost their lives in the czar's service striving to win that cross."

Harry took the cross from Dick's coat and looked at it long and wistfully. He appreciated it far more than did our hero.

Ivanoff declared Dick the luckiest man in Russia, and said:

"It will have the tendency to make you many enemies among those who have failed to get it, because you are a foreigner."

"Yes. I can understand that," remarked Dick, "but I don't intend to wear it much."

"If you are ever seen without it it will be very serious for you at court."

"Is that so?"

"Yes, and it is bad for a man in Russia to incur the displeasure of the czar."

"Then I shall have to wear it."

"Of course."

Dick pinned the iron cross on the left breast of his uniform and thought no more about it.

That evening the Little Wonder stopped about half a mile above the spot where the last encounter with the Nihilists took place, and proceeded to rest on the laurels won that morning.

The destruction of the iron-clad ship was attributed to the famous torpedo-boat, and the news of the success of the experiment was telegraphed all over Europe, creating a profound sensation in military circles.

But the Nihilists were more than ever bent on the destruction of the torpedo-boat and the heroic young American in command of it. They never ceased their efforts on account of a failure.

On the night after the destruction of the iron-clad the Little Wonder was resting on the bottom of the Neva, when Dick resolved to put on his diving suit and go out among the fish that were sporting around in the glare of the electric light in incredible numbers.

With his knapsack full of air to last him several hours, he stepped into the compartment through which he had to pass to get at the outer door.

Then he closed the inner door and opened the outer one. The sea rushed in like an avalanche and filled the compartment.

Dick then stepped out into the mud in which the boat rested, and was soon in the midst of a perfect swarm of fish.

He caught a number of them and had some fun with them, after which he passed round to the other side of the boat.

There he was astonished at running into three other divers.

They seized him, and a desperate struggle ensued.

The divers kicked off their lead weights from their feet, and thus relieved, the pressure of the water quickly bore them to the surface. They held on to our hero, and he was carried up with them to the side of a row-boat, in which were four Nihilists. A terrific struggle began, our hero fighting frantically for his life.

CHAPTER VII.

A STRUGGLE FOR LIFE—HELP IN TIME.

THE fates seemed to be against Dick, for the enemy were too many for him in the water. Struggle as hard as the nature of his apparel would permit, they were on the point of drawing him into the boat.

But while their lightness had drawn him to the surface after they had discarded their lead-weights, his heavy weights grew very heavy as they neared the top.

They were trying to make their comrades in the boat understand that they wanted to get him aboard.

During the struggle they had little time to explain, as only signs could be used in the diving-suits.

Dick realized his danger and determined to die game if he had to. By a desperate dash with both arms he freed himself from the grasp of two of his assailants and went down again with the third man.

The man was pretty well exhausted by the struggle, and could make but little resistance. Having no weights to his feet, he was almost as helpless as an infant in the hands of the young American.

But as they struck bottom near the Little Wonder, Dick was overjoyed at seeing Scipio moving about in his diving-suit, he having come out to have some fun with the fish in the glare of the electric light.

He knew the suit at a glance, and so made motions to him to take hold of the diver.

Scipio grasped him like a cuttle-fish, and the Nihilist made no more resistance.

Dick then drew a knife from the case in his suit and cut the air-tube of the Nihilist diver, holding to the lower end to prevent him from drowning in his helpless condition.

Then he led the way to the boat, entering the side door, followed by Scipio and the prisoner.

Then he closed the door and touched the button that set the pumps going. In just three minutes the water was all out, and they were left standing as upon dry land.

Dick opened the inner door and entered the main room of the boat, leading the prisoner, to the very great surprise of Harry and Ivanoff.

He threw off his suit as quickly as he could, as did Scipio.

"Who am dis hyer man, cap'en?" Scipio asked.

"He's a Nihilist," replied Dick. "Get him out of his suit as quickly as you can, and let us see what kind of a fellow he is."

They soon had him out of his suit, and he proved to be a hard-looking case—a Nihilist from the slums of the Russian capital.

Ivanoff turned upon him, and asked, sternly:

"Who are you?"

"A Russian," was the quiet reply.

"What do you want here?"

"A drink of kurmiss, if you please."

The impudence of the answer put Ivanoff in a towering rage, and he would have cut him down on the spot had not Dick interfered and asked what was the matter.

Ivanoff was too angry to make a reply at the moment, and so Dick turned to Scipio and put the question to him.

"Him say he doan want nuffin but er drink ob kurmiss," replied Scipio, with a broad grin on his black face.

Dick and Harry roared.

"Don't hurt him, lieutenant," said Dick. "We'll handcuff him and turn him over to the police in the morning."

"Better thrust him out as food for the fishes," said the Russian officer.

"No, we have no right to kill prisoners," said Dick, in reply. "This fellow may give information to the police, and——"

"You don't know them, captain," returned the lieutenant. "That fellow might be roasted alive at the stake, and wouldn't utter a word against his companions, even if to do so would save his life."

"Well, I'll move down about a quarter of a mile, tie him hard and fast, put out the lights and go to bed. To-morrow morning we can turn him over to the police."

"Maybe he is one of the executioners sent to carry out your sentence," remarked Harry.

"Perhaps he is. The others will see to-morrow that he is the one in trouble and not me."

The fellow would answer no questions intended to draw any information from him, and seemed utterly indifferent to his fate, which he knew would be either Siberia or death. As between the two he had no choice.

When morning came the Little Wonder rose to the surface, and at a signal from the turret a police boat came out.

The prisoner was handed over to the police, with a statement as to how he was captured.

On the way back to the pier the Nihilist sprang out of the police boat and disappeared under the water.

The police drew their revolvers and stood ready to fire the moment he should appear again.

But they waited in vain.

He never came up any more, and one of the officers suggested that

perhaps the heavy handcuffs had weighted him down so that he had drowned.

Dick, Harry and Ivanoff were out on the turret of the Little Wonder and saw the suicide of the prisoner—if suicide it was.

"They don't mind death in the least," said Ivanoff, as he saw that the fellow did not rise to the surface. "They know that they take their lives in their hands when they go into a conspiracy like the one they are now engaged in, and when caught don't care how soon or what manner of death they die."

"It is strange that they tried to reach us by divers when once that method had failed and cost so many lives," remarked Dick.

"Yes, it would seem so," returned Ivanoff. "They reason that, having failed once, you would naturally suppose that they would not attempt it again. For that very reason they make the second, third and fourth attempt, hoping to catch you napping. You did not dream that they would come again to-night, and it was by the merest accident that you discovered them."

"You are right," remarked Dick. "They are good reasoners, even if they are villainous in their methods. One must be on the lookout for them all the time."

A few days after the last attempt to destroy the Little Wonder, Dick paid a visit to the office of the Minister of War, and was closeted with that dignitary for over an hour in close conversation.

At the end of the conference the minister invited the young captain to attend a reception to the foreign ambassadors, at his residence, the next evening.

"There will be some English and American officers present," he said, "and it may be that you will meet with some acquaintances."

Dick was delighted. He had been quite anxious to see something of Russian high life, and this would give him the coveted opportunity.

He went back to the Little Wonder and told Ivanoff of the invitation he had received, adding:

"The minister said that invitations would be sent to you and Harry, too, but we all can't attend at once, you know."

"Of course not. The boat must not be left unguarded for a single moment."

"Leave the boat to Scip and I," said Harry. "You will want Ivanoff along as interpreter. We can take care of the Little Wonder, eh, Scip?"

"Yes, sah," and Scipio grinned as if anticipating a ruction if left in charge of the boat.

"Well, I'll try to arrange it so you can have a chance to see the reception for a little while," replied Dick.

The next day Dick prepared to attend the reception at the palace of the War Minister. Invitations had come for Harry and Ivanoff. Harry did not care to go, and so Dick and the young Russian officer set out together, leaving Harry in command of the Little Wonder.

It was a beautiful moonlight evening, and Harry and Scipio sat out on the turret gazing over the moonlit waters and the lights of the great city.

Precisely at the appointed hour Captain Sherman and Lieutenant Ivanoff entered the palace of the War Minister, and were received with the consideration due their rank.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN ATTEMPT TO BRIBE OUR HERO.

THE reception was a grand affair.

Brave men and beautiful women were there, the former in brilliant uniforms and the latter dazzling with diamonds and beautiful costumes.

The representatives of various European governments were there, as well as a host of nobles and princes of the Russian Empire.

Dick was amazed at the reception he received.

The cross of Ivan caused all the Russians to bow and smile and pay court to him. Nor was there a more manly looking youth in all the vast assemblage than he.

Men and women of the nobility were presented in rapid succession, all of whom had a kind, complimentary word to say to him.

Several English and American officers were introduced to him, and with some of the latter he had an extremely pleasant time, as he could converse with them without the aid of an interpreter.

"How do you like Russia so far, captain?" an American officer asked.

"Very well indeed. I have been well treated since my arrival in St. Petersburg, and I have come to like the place. This is the first time I have seen any Russian society, though."

"You will be much better pleased when you become better acquainted," remarked another old officer, who had seen a good deal of St. Petersburg.

"I presume I shall. Surely with so much youth and beauty one could be content anywhere."

"Don't forget that you are a married man, captain," suggested another, laughing good-naturedly.

"No danger of that," he replied. "My wife is coming soon to take charge of me."

Just then a British naval captain came up and was introduced.

He was captain of an English man-of-war then lying in port, and his manner was very cordial for an Englishman.

"I have heard of you, captain," he said, "and have long been interested in your famous torpedo-boat. I have promised myself that I shall see it and go through it before I leave port."

"I am afraid you have made a rash promise, captain," said Dick, "as no one is allowed to go on board the Little Wonder, except on a permit from the Minister of War, and even he dare not give one till the czar has first been consulted about it."

"Ah, very particular, I see," remarked the Briton.

"As they should be," remarked Dick. "It is a very valuable secret."

"Perhaps it is. The science of naval warfare increases in value every year," and he assumed an air of indifference that was not calculated to increase any cordiality of feeling between them.

A few moments later a gentleman decorated with the ribbon of the order of St. George came up.

He was a British lord.

"Captain Sherman, permit me to make you acquainted with Lord S——," said the British naval captain.

Dick and the nobleman both made profound bows, and then began passing the compliments of the season.

Lord S—— was an oily talker, and evidently a secret agent of the British government.

He took Dick on his arm and promenaded through the great salon, growing quite confidential in tone at times.

Dick was amazed at the condescension till he thought of the cross of Ivan.

Then all was understood.

During the evening he danced with a number of very beautiful young ladies.

The prettiest one of the lot could not speak a word of English.

As Dick could not utter a word of Russian, they looked at each other and smiled as they danced around the room.

She was the daughter of a noble, and was engaged to be married to a general in the army.

By and by he was introduced to the widow of a distinguished Russian officer who could speak English fluently.

Her name was Countess Orloffski.

She was young, beautiful, full of vivacity, and in a little while she had completely fascinated him.

"Do you know I very much desire to go on board your famous craft, captain?" she said. "I never wanted to inspect anything so much in life."

"Get a permit from the War Minister," said Dick, "and I shall be glad to show you through every part of the boat."

"Would you not let me see it without a permit?" she asked.

"No, madame."

"Not if I came alone and in disguise?"

"Of course not," and Dick looked surprised.

"Why, captain," she exclaimed, "they told me you were a very gallant man," and she showed an even row of very beautiful teeth.

"I hope you will not contradict the report, madame," said he, bowing low to her.

"Oh, I shall have to be compelled to say that you even refused to

receive me on board your vessel even when I offered to go in disguise."

"If you do I shall stoutly deny that you made such a proposition."

"Why so?"

"Because you would be suspected of being a Nihilist, and that I would perjure myself to prevent, as I am sure you are loyal to the empire."

"Why, of course I am loyal!" she exclaimed. "Everybody in Russia knows that I am the most loyal of the loyal. But you will do me the honor of attending a *fete* at my residence on Tuesday evening next, will you not, captain?"

"With the greatest pleasure," he cried.

"I shall do all in my power to make your visit enjoyable," she said.

During the evening Lord S—— again met and took charge of him, and in the course of conversation the nobleman asked:

"Do you contemplate remaining long in the service of Russia?"

"No, my lord. I shall remain only for two or three years."

"Wouldn't you like to enter the service of England?"

"No, my lord."

"You would be among your own race then, and feel more at home."

"Excuse me, my lord," he replied, "I would feel less at home in England than in any other country in Europe."

"Why so?" his lordship asked.

"Because of the prejudice in England against Americans."

"I think you are mistaken."

"I don't think I am. I have been in England, my lord."

"Are you not prejudiced against England yourself?"

"Yes, I believe I am."

"Would not a very high rank and a heavy income induce you to enter the service of England?"

Dick shook his head.

"I could have served England a lifetime without ever obtaining the honors that have been conferred upon me here," he said.

"I am inclined to think you could command a very high rank in England immediately on your entering her service. You could be made an admiral, and——"

"I'd rather be a plain American citizen than hold the highest rank that England could confer on me," said Dick, interrupting him.

"You have very strong prejudices, captain," remarked the lord, smiling.

"Perhaps I have," said Dick, "and they move me profoundly."

"But cannot gold break them down? You entered Russia for pay, and now England stands ready to duplicate ten-fold, twenty or even fifty-fold, your contract with the czar."

Dick shook his head and said:

"No—I cannot enter the service of England."

"Then you would not object to building a torpedo-boat for me like the one you now command, would you?"

Dick looked up at the oily-tongued diplomat, and for the first time understood that the nobleman was really trying to buy him off from the czar at any cost.

His face flushed indignantly for a moment or two, and then he regained control of himself.

"My lord," he said, "there is not money enough in England to buy me. I am in the czar's service, and shall remain true to him till the end of the term for which I entered it."

Lord S—— colored up and remarked:

"You have been pleased to misunderstand my remarks. Allow me to recall them, and let them be considered as never having been uttered."

"Just as your lordship pleases," said Dick, with a bow.

Lord S—— bowed ceremoniously and left him just as a man came up with a celebrated Russian beauty leaning on his arm.

He was an *attache* of the American Legation. Dick recognized him, though they had never been introduced to each other.

The lady turned to her escort and whispered something to him, and the next moment the young American introduced him to her.

"I met your wife here two years ago," said the lady, "when she was single and traveling with her guardian."

"Indeed! And how did you learn that we were married?" our hero asked.

"Oh, the Russian papers have published a good deal about you. We know all about your blind father and your devotion to him."

Dick was profoundly moved, and spent half an hour talking to the young beauty, after which Ivanoff came to him and said that some other parties were waiting to see him.

On the way through the throng he suddenly ran against a man whom he had not seen for over two years, and whom he knew to be his mortal enemy.

It was Jack Lawler.

Their eyes met in a steady gaze for a moment or two.

Jack's were full of malignant hate, whilst Dick merely smiled and passed on.

Jack looked after him, grinding his teeth in envious rage, and hissed through clenched teeth:

"Blast you! If I could cut you down and escape I'd do it! I hate you, Dick Sherman, and sooner or later I'll make you feel it with all its weight!"

"Jack is here," muttered Dick to himself, as he accompanied Ivanoff across the grand salon. "He hates me now worse than ever, and I've got to look out for him. I wonder what he is doing here in St. Petersburg?"

CHAPTER IX.

AN IMPORTANT CAPTURE AND RECAPTURE.

STILL thinking of Jack Lawler, Dick permitted Ivanoff to lead him to the other end of the room, where quite a party of dignitaries of the empire were gathered. The American Minister was one of the number, and he received the young hero with a good, old-fashioned shake of the hand.

He was then presented to the company, and a great deal of attention was paid to him.

In the course of conversation Dick asked the American Minister if he knew of one Jack Lawler in the city.

"Yes," said the minister. "He lives here in good but quiet style. Do you know him?"

"Yes," replied Dick. "I met him only a few minutes ago in this house. We are enemies, and I have reason to believe that he——"

The minister nudged him as a signal to keep quiet.

Others were listening.

Dick turned around and saw Jack approaching the American Minister, to whom he bowed familiarly.

He passed on, and Dick imagined that he saw something in Lawler's manner that meant mischief of some kind.

Keeping his eye on him, he saw him leave the house.

"Ivanoff," he said to the young Russian officer, "I must reach the Little Wonder in as quick time as possible."

"Why such haste?"

"I have reasons for it."

Ivanoff went out and ordered the carriage, whilst Dick sought out the host, and in a few whispered words explained to him why he was compelled to leave so soon.

It was then midnight.

Dick and Ivanoff hastened away, taking a roundabout way to reach the pier off which the Little Wonder was lying.

On the pier they gave the signal for the Little Wonder to approach. Harry promptly obeyed the signal and sent the boat alongside the pier, where Dick and Ivanoff promptly sprang on board.

"Harry, I believe Jack Lawler will try to get on board to-night, and I want you to let him do it while Ivanoff, Scipio and I hide below."

"All right," said Dick's faithful friend, and the boat was backed off from the pier about one hundred fathoms again.

Dick and the others went below, and Harry remained on the turret. Half an hour later Harry heard a very good imitation of Dick's whistle from the pier.

"Is that you, Dick?" Harry called.

"Yes—come over quick," came back from the pier.

Scipio sent the boat forward, and soon Harry could see two men on the pier.

Pretending not to notice that the man was not Dick, Harry ran in close enough for the two men to leap on board the turret.

In a moment Harry was in the grasp of the two men, and ere he made any resistance a pair of steel handcuffs were on his wrists.

"What does this outrage mean?" demanded Harry.

"It means that Jack Lawler is in command of the Little Wonder," replied Jack.

Harry looked closely at him and pretended to recognize him.

"Jack Lawler, as I live!" he exclaimed in pretended surprise, "and I thought you were Dick."

"I left Dick at the house of the Minister of War," said Jack, "and I have come here to take his place. Now, see here, Harry Bolton, I am not going to be trifled with. I want you to set out for England right now—without waiting ten minutes. Do you understand?"

"I do."

"Well?"

"Come below and we'll be off in just two minutes."

Harry led the way and the other two followed with revolvers in hand.

"Where's the nigger?" Jack asked.

"Hyer me, massa," said Scipio, with a grin on his black face.

Jack looked at him in silence for a minute or two, as if sizing him up, and then said:

"You will have to be a good nigger now, and obey my orders. I am captain of this craft now."

"Yes, sah," replied Scipio, his eyes gleaming like a tiger's.

"Turn her toward England, Harry Bolton, and recollect that I hold you responsible for the safety of the boat."

"All right," said Harry.

Suddenly a door of an inner room opened and Dick and Ivanoff appeared.

Scipio sprang at Jack Lawler and hurled him to the floor with such force as to stun him.

Ivanoff and Harry took care of the other fellow.

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Scipio. "Youse ain't gwine ter England. Youse er gwine ter Siberia, youse is."

It was all done so quickly that Lawler did not know much about it till he came to.

Then he recognized Dick and his face blanched ashen-hued.

"Well, Jack, old man," said Dick, "you have been up to your old tricks again I see."

Jack was too much broken up to say anything.

"I saw you leave the party at the minister's house," said Dick, "and surmised that you would call to pay me a visit during my absence. I managed to get here a few minutes ahead of you. So you want to go to England, do you?"

"Yes," was the reply.

"Wouldn't you rather go to Siberia?"

"No," he gasped.

"I fear you will have to go there."

Jack was silent.

Scipio had placed handcuffs on his wrists, and bound his feet fast together.

Ivanoff had done the same service for the other prisoner.

They then searched for the key of the handcuffs on Harry, and in a few minutes he was free again.

"Now, Harry, go to the bottom till morning. We are out about a couple of miles now, I guess."

Harry obeyed, and in a few moments the Little Wonder was going down toward the bottom, nearly two miles out from the piers of the city.

It did not reach the bottom.

The water was too deep.

It stopped when the pressure of the water balanced the weight, and it remained suspended between the surface and bottom.

Dick had just seated himself on a stool by the side of Jack Lawler, who was still lying bound on the floor, when the boat was struck by something with such force as to throw Dick and Ivanoff to the floor.

CHAPTER X.

BATTLE WITH A WHALE—DICK CAPTURES HIS INVETERATE ENEMY.

THE shock was so great that the Little Wonder rolled almost on her beam ends, and turned round and round as though caught in a whirlpool.

Dick scrambled to his feet and sprang to the button that controlled the pumps.

In a second's time he set the pumps going, and the boat began to rise toward the surface.

"What is the matter?" Ivanoff asked, in tremulous tones.

"I don't know," replied Dick. "I am going to the surface to find out."

"It seems to me that something struck us," ventured Harry.

"We'll see. Look and see if there is a leak anywhere, Harry."

Harry began a search, whilst Dick hastened to elevate the turret the moment the surface was reached.

Opening the door in the top of the turret, Dick climbed out in time to find the sea being churned into a foam by a whale, maddened with pain from a collision with the iron hull of the boat.

He drew a long breath of relief and said:

"It was a hard blow, old fellow, and must make your head ache."

Then looking down below he called out:

"It was a whale. Come up and see it. You stay below there, Scipio."

"Yes, sah," responded the cook, and Harry and Ivanoff ran up to take a look at the monster.

The leviathan rolled and lashed the waves at a furious rate, and was nearly twice the length of the boat against which he had run when blinded by the electric light.

"He is a monster!" said Harry.

"Yes," returned Dick. "I should not like to meet him on the bottom in a diving suit."

"Look out!" cried Ivanoff. "He is coming again!"

They barely had time to secure themselves, when, enraged to madden fury, the whale struck with his tail, and the report might have been heard miles away. Dick ran down into the torpedo-room and soon reappeared with a dynamite cartridge.

Watching his opportunity, he hurled it at the whale's head just as he was coming for the boat again.

It struck in his mouth, and a report like a huge cannon followed.

The concussion nearly knocked him into the sea. He would have fallen had Ivanoff not caught him.

Big as the whale was, the cartridge shattered his head, killing him almost instantly.

His tail gave a few convulsive shudders, and then the huge carcass floated in the water.

"That is pretty big game," said Dick.

"Well, I should say it was," replied Harry. "That fellow is worth one thousand dollars or more. We must tow him into port if we can."

"Oh, we can do that, I guess."

While they were trying to manage to tow the carcass in, the steam tug of the harbor police came up, attracted by the flash and report of the dynamite cartridge.

"What's the trouble?" was asked in a hoarse voice in Russian.

Ivanoff had to answer and tell what had happened with the whale, but said nothing about the capture of Jack Lawler and his companion.

The police laughed at the idea of a whale attacking the torpedo-boat and coming to grief.

"Can you tow him up to the pier?" Ivanoff asked.

"No," was the reply. "Leave the carcass alone."

"We want to give it to the poor of the city."

But that made no difference with the captain of the police tug. He headed for the city again, leaving our hero alone with his prize.

Dick soon devised a plan to attach a line to a fluke of the dead whale, and then set the Little Wonder to pulling the huge carcass toward the pier. It was slow work, but a couple of hours brought them to the pier, where it was secured so as to remain stationary till morning.

The news spread early the next morning that a monster whale was moored at the pier, and great crowds soon gathered to see it.

Of course the police interfered, and then an officer came to Dick to ask for instructions as to the disposition to be made of the whale.

"Give it to the poor fishwomen of the city," he said, and it was done, a great crowd of fishwomen gathering at the carcass to see the cutting up done.

The matter of the whale being attended to, our hero turned his attention to the two prisoners in his charge.

Jack Lawler had been his unrelenting enemy for years—ever since they were schoolboys together on Long Island, in America. He had followed him to Russia, and, on one occasion, had succeeded in capturing the Little Wonder. But his ignorance of its machinery prevented him from keeping it, and he barely escaped capture himself in getting away from it. Justice would demand that he be dealt with as he deserved.

"Jack," said Dick to him, after he had gotten rid of the whale, "I am going to turn you over to the Russian authorities."

"Dick, for God's sake don't do that," he pleaded.

"Why should I not, Jack?"

"Because they would kill me."

"Well, would not they be justified in doing so?"

That was a poser.

Jack made no answer, and Dick said:

"I will ask that you be sent to Siberia; so you need not fear anything on that score."

"Oh, God! Dick, ask them to take me out and shoot me at once."

"You don't want to go to Siberia then?"

"No, a thousand times no! Let me go away, and you'll never see me in Russia again."

"Jack, you are the most heartless villain I ever came across in all my life. Here you are, as precious a scoundrel as ever lived, bound hand and foot for trying to ruin me and violating the laws of nations, asking me to let you go free, knowing that were I to do so the czar would send me to Siberia in double-quick time."

"But the czar need not know anything about it, Dick."

"But the fact cannot be kept secret. Lieutenant Ivanoff here is a Russian naval officer, the immediate representative of the czar on board this craft, and he would know that I had proved recreant to my trust. No, Jack, either you or I will have to go to Siberia."

Jack turned to Ivanoff and asked:

"Can you not save me?"

"Why should I?" the Russian asked. "You are the enemy of my country and have violated her laws."

"Jack, there is a possibility that you may escape after all," said Dick, after a pause of some minutes.

"How?" the villain eagerly asked.

"By telling the authorities all you know about this matter."

Jack glared at him in surprise.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"I mean that you should tell who hired you to do this thing."

"Nobody hired me."

"That won't do, Jack. You have been engaged in no private enterprise here in St. Petersburg, yet you have always dressed well, had plenty of money with nothing to do. Now I know that you have no income in America. Who has been backing you in this thing?"

Dick looked him full in the face as he spoke, and Jack did not dare look him in the eye.

But the villain made no reply, and Dick remarked:

"You must look to your backers to get you out of the scrape. I don't intend to be annoyed by you any longer."

Jack pleaded with tears in his eyes, but Dick believed that he was leagued with the Nihilists, who had repeatedly tried to kill him, and would not listen to him.

A police boat was signaled, and when it came alongside the Little Wonder Dick gave the officer in command the two prisoners.

As he was being transferred to the police boat, Lawler turned upon our hero and hissed:

"You have got the best of me now, Dick Sherman, but it will do you no good. If I fall, or am sent to Siberia, there are those here who will avenge me."

"Yes, your Nihilist friends," said Dick. "I don't worry about them much. They have been after me ever since I came here, but you see I am all right yet. I'll send some more of them to join you in Siberia. You won't lack for company. When you have the leisure time sit down and make a mental calculation of what it has profited

you to pursue me so persistently with your hate. Come and see me when you get back from Siberia."

CHAPTER XI.

THE FATE OF JACK LAWLER—LORD S—— PLEADS FOR HIM—DICK IS ORDERED TO THE BLACK SEA.

As the prisoners were borne away, Dick stood on the turret of the torpedo-boat and gazed after them till they were landed on the pier.

"What a fool Jack has been," he muttered to himself. "He will either be executed or sent to Siberia, and he can't say he does not deserve either punishment. I am not sorry for him, but who would have supposed that when we were schoolboys on Long Island we would have thus met and parted in Russia?"

Of course Lawler was cast into prison, and the detectives went to work to trace him up. It turned out that while he was not an actual member of the Nihilists' organization, he co-operated with them in their efforts to destroy the torpedo-boat.

It was also believed that he was concerned in the attempt to capture Captain Sherman.

A few days after Jack was locked up Lord S——, the English nobleman, who had tried to bribe Dick to leave Russia and enter the service of England, sent a messenger to our hero praying for an interview.

"Tell him I shall be at the office of the Minister of Justice at noon to-morrow," said Dick to the messenger, who immediately departed.

"I wonder what he wants?" said Dick to Harry, who was present when the messenger came to the pier.

"That is hard to say," replied Harry, "but you can bet that it is something of very great importance, or his ribs would not have taken the trouble of sending a special messenger to you."

"Do you know I think he is agent of the British government, sent here either to buy or destroy this torpedo-boat."

"No!" ejaculated Harry.

"Well, I do. He offered me an enormous salary and very high rank in the English navy if I would resign and enter the service of England."

"Jerusalem!" exclaimed Harry. "You are getting a name in Europe. By and by some country will be offering you a crown and a throne."

"Oh, come off!" and they both indulged in a hearty laugh.

But the next morning Dick was at the office of the Minister of Justice, prepared to make the charge against Lawler and his companion of attempting to capture the Little Wonder and run her off beyond the jurisdiction of the czar.

Lord S—— was there to meet him.

He was deeply agitated.

"My dear captain," he said, taking Dick aside and speaking in a confidential tone, "surely you are not going to consign your countryman to the tender mercies of a Russian court?"

"Why should I not, my lord?" Dick replied.

"Because he is your countryman."

"But I don't care to claim him as a countryman of mine. England would show him no mercy under similar circumstances, and I hope that Russia will be as wise as England, at least."

"Let me plead with you to ask the tribunal to spare him—to simply send him out of the country."

"My lord, what is Jack Lawler to you that you should take such an interest in him, knowing as you do that he is an unprincipled scoundrel?"

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the nobleman. "I do not know him to be such as you characterize him."

"Well, I do. He has twice attempted to capture the Little Wonder. What would you do in England if you were situated as I am, and——"

"My dear captain, England and Russia are two countries."

"Yes, and I am in the service of one and you the other. When you succeed in making me forget my duty you may run me through the body, and I shall not resist."

"I would not insult your intelligence, captain, by attempting anything of the kind," said his lordship. "I simply beg of you not to let these Russians see one Anglo-Saxon push another to his death. If you make the charge against your countryman he will be sentenced to die."

"Will your lordship say that England would not also sentence him to death?"

"No, sir. I cannot say that."

"Will you say that he ought not to suffer the penalty of his crime?"

The nobleman made no reply.

"You do not wish to answer that question, my lord," said Dick. "Your lordship has a motive in asking me to intercede for Lawler which you dare not avow. I know very little about the diplomacy of nations, and care even less. But I have a sense of honor that will leave the prisoner to depend upon his backers to save him from the fate he has brought on himself."

"Who are his backers?" the nobleman asked.

Dick looked surprised, and asked:

"Is it possible that you do not know?"

"It is not only possible, but a fact," said the nobleman.

"Then your lordship is as ignorant as I am on that point."

After a few more words Dick bowed himself away from the nobleman, and entered the department of justice by passing through an inner door on the left of the corridor in which he had been standing.

The Minister of Justice received him with such distinguished consideration that he was kept bowing for a couple of minutes.

Jack and the other prisoner were there in irons, looking very dejected.

Dick told in a few words the story of the capture of the Little Wonder by Lawler and his companion, and its recapture by himself and Lieutenant Ivanoff, assisted by Scipio, the black cook.

No other witness was called.

No other was necessary.

They were both sentenced for life to Siberia.

When Jack heard the sentence he turned on Dick and said:

"For this day's work you shall die, Dick Sherman, as surely as the sun rises and sets."

Dick made no reply, but turned away to follow an officer of the court who had motioned to him.

In another room he was met by an officer of the czar's household, who handed him a sealed packet, saying:

"Open it when you are on board your vessel," and then he displayed the czar's signet ring, which Dick readily recognized.

He bowed and left the building by another way, and in another hour was back on board the Little Wonder.

"What was done with Lawler?" Harry asked, the moment our hero came on board.

"Siberia."

That was all he said.

But it was enough, and Harry shuddered at the bare mention of the word.

Dick opened the packet and found sealed instructions from the czar through the Minister of War.

He was ordered to the Black Sea for the purpose of blowing up the hulls of several great war-ships which had been scuttled and sunk in the harbor of Sebastopol during the Crimean war.

"By George!" he exclaimed, "we are ordered on a long trip. Get ready to sail at once."

"We are ready now," said Harry. "Where are we bound?"

"To the Black Sea."

Harry and Ivanoff whistled their astonishment.

It was a long voyage, as they would have to circumnavigate nearly the whole of Europe in order to reach the Black Sea.

They would have to pass through the Strait of Gibraltar and traverse nearly the entire length of the Mediterranean Sea to the Bosphorus.

Dick was prompt to obey orders, and in less than ten minutes after reading the orders he had received, the torpedo-boat was on its way out of the harbor of St. Petersburg.

CHAPTER XII.

OUT AT SEA—BEFORE GIBRALTAR.

Out at sea Dick, Harry and Ivanoff referred to the papers again to get a more thorough knowledge of their duties on the voyage.

Dick read them through very carefully, and then Ivanoff remarked:

"This thing is serious. It may bring on a war between Russia and Turkey."

"Why do you think so?" Dick asked.

"Because by treaty Russia is not allowed to pass armed vessels through the Bosphorus."

"Are we an armed vessel?" Dick asked.

"If we are not, what are we?"

"That is another question. We are sent to the Black Sea on an errand of peace—not war."

"So we are, and in that arises a question that prompts the czar to send us there. He will claim that our mission is pacific, and the work we have to do will sustain the claim. Yet all Europe looks upon the Little Wonder as the most dangerous vessel afloat."

"Yes, that's so."

"You are instructed to go through the Bosphorus under water, so as not to be seen?"

"Yes."

"Our presence in the Black Sea will soon become known to all Europe, and Turkey will ask how we got there. Of course, we are prohibited from saying anything, and all questions will be referred to St. Petersburg. The czars have all longed to be masters of Constantinople, and have waged several wars to capture it. But for the interposition of Europe, they would have driven the Turks into Asia long ago, and made Constantinople the seat of the Russian Empire. That city is the key to Europe, and the European powers are too jealous of each other to permit any very strong government to own it."

"I see," said Dick, musingly. "We may be the cause of a war, but we will obey orders all the same."

"Yes. Our presence in the Black Sea will be sure to raise the question as to how we got there. But with that we have nothing to do."

"No, of course, not. Well, I am glad we have been ordered there, anyway."

"Why?"

"Because the Neva will soon be solid ice."

"Ah! Do you know I have often thought of that!" said Ivanoff.

"Yes, and so have I," put in Harry.

"Well, we won't have any ice to speak of," said Dick. "The Black Sea is at least a thousand miles south of the Neva. We are in luck on that score, though we won't see so much of high life down there."

"What's high life when one is always exposed to the danger of freezing to death," said Harry. "We can have fun enough in the Black Sea, I'll warrant. There are some large cities down there."

"Yes. There's Odessa, one of the greatest grain markets in Europe. It is a very nice place in winter, but hot, disagreeable and dusty in summer."

"Oh, we won't die of ennui in the Black Sea," said Dick, laughing good-naturedly.

When they were out of sight of land the sea began rolling horribly, so as to render it extremely difficult for any one to keep on his feet.

At last Dick decided to go down about thirty or forty feet to escape the action of the billows. By that means they escaped some very rough seas.

But they had to be very careful, as they could take no observations under the water. To strike a rock while going at full speed would be disastrous in the extreme.

After running about ten hours under water, they decided to run up to the surface and take an observation, if possible.

But the stars were shining on a smooth sea, and the vessel was going at a good rate of speed.

Seeing a large sailing vessel in front, they resolved to creep up under it and give all hands on board a first-class scare.

Dropping down under water again, the Little Wonder plunged forward till it was directly under the ship.

Then she rose up and bumped against the bottom of the ship, at the same time flashing her electric light in the water.

Such consternation was never before witnessed on board any ship as followed that bumping and flashing of light.

From captain down to the cook, every soul on board was demoralized. Some thought the ship had struck on a sunken rock; but as she kept on her course it soon became clear that she had not struck anything that was stationary.

But the superstitious sailors were in a perfect tremor of terror, and were hardly capable of obeying orders.

At each flash of light the sea was lighted up all round the ship, so that fishes could be seen swimming about.

Thinking he had given them a good enough scare, Dick put out the light and dropped astern, where he came to the surface.

"If we watch the papers we'll hear of a wonderful phenomenon at sea from the report of that skipper," said Dick. "They have all had a scare which they will never forget."

"Yes, you may depend on that," said Ivanoff. "I know something about the superstition of sailors. The yarns that will be told about the flashes of light under sea will be remembered all over the world."

In the darkness they could not make out what vessel it was or where she belonged, and after a while they let her drift away out of sight.

The Little Wonder then went on her way rejoicing.

The next day they saw many vessels in different directions, going and coming.

But they were careful not to let themselves be seen by any of them, as they were to avoid others as much as possible on the trip.

Several times during the day they were compelled to drop down under the water to escape too close inspection from the decks of other ships.

Traveling this way they soon passed round England, and turned toward the Rock of Gibraltar.

Dick, Harry and Ivanoff were very anxious to see that famous fortress. They had read and heard so much of it that they could not dream of passing it without taking a good look at it.

At last they came in sight of it, on a clear sunny afternoon.

They came up on the turret which loomed scarcely three feet above the water, and stood there with spy-glasses gazing at the frowning fortress.

The Little Wonder kept steadily on its way, but by and by the officers of the half dozen war vessels, anchored under the shadow of the rock, saw the three men standing on a queer-looking craft which was making good speed through the water.

She carried no colors, and one of the men-of-war hailed her.

Dick made no reply, and in another minute or two he saw that they were preparing to pursue.

"They are going to pursue us," said Harry, in some alarm.

"Let 'em come if they want to," and Dick laughed at the idea of a huge war vessel pursuing the Little Wonder, which could sink out of sight and defy them.

Two ships of the line began the pursuit, and, when Dick made no response to their signals, two great guns were fired.

The immense balls came shrieking over the heads of our heroes.

"The next ones will be lower and nearer to us," said Dick. "Come below. We must get under out of sight."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE PIRATE.

THE two men-of-war pushed on, and were soon on the very spot where they had seen the strange craft go down.

They cast anchors, and were consulting about having divers go down to ascertain the nature of the craft, when the lookout aloft called attention to a black looking object several miles away, lying lazily in the water.

The officer in command of one of the war-ships brought his glass to bear upon the object, but could not recognize it as the same craft.

No wonder.

The turret had been lowered, and the back of the torpedo-boat looked more like the back of a great turtle or whale than like a vessel.

"It is a whale," he said, and so the two stiff men-of-war remained anchored over the spot where they had seen the stranger go down.

Dick took a squint at them without exposing himself to be seen, and chuckled.

"Those fellows are the biggest chuckle-heads in Europe," he said, as he continued on his course. "If it was night now I'd go back there and give them a scare which they would never forget."

"We have no time to fool with them," remarked Ivanoff.

"No. They might make trouble. We will go straight ahead on our course, and make the Bosphorus as quietly as we can."

The war-ships were left far behind, and the little craft went on plowing its way through the waters of the blue Mediterranean, toward the sea of Marmora, leaving the Britons worrying over an unsolved problem.

To avoid, as much as possible, the necessity of remaining so much under water, Dick decided to steer over on the African coast, and thus get out of the regular roadway of the traffic of the sea.

When night came on they were within a few miles of the African coast. The vessels of the natives were of peculiar make, some of them were strange-looking craft, which, our hero was confident, were nothing more than corsairs, with which that coast had long been infested.

When morning came again the coast was but a mile or two away, and our heroes enjoyed the splendid scenery to their hearts' content.

Off the coast of Algiers they were chased by an Algerian pirate, but it took them a good while to become satisfied that such was the character of the chaser.

"Well, I'll give you a dose that will put a stop to your piracy forever," said Dick, as he proceeded to affix a torpedo in position.

That arranged, he sank the boat out of sight.

The pirate was not more than a half mile away, and was coming at full speed, with her guns double-shotted. What in blazing thunder had become of the little craft with three men?

Suddenly there was a terrible explosion, and the pirate was shattered to fine kindling wood.

Those on board who were not instantly killed were soon floundering in the water, for the craft went down like a rock.

That was the end of that pirate, and Dick was about to hasten away from the spot, when Scipio said:

"Git um gold, Cap'en Dick."

"What gold, Scip?"

"Pirates' gold. Dem pirates hab gold all de time, sah."

"By George, Dick!" exclaimed Harry; "we may have done a good thing. Let's see if there was anything valuable on board the rascally craft."

Dick sent the boat up to the surface of the water, where one of the pirates was caught on the top of the turret.

"By George!" exclaimed Harry. "Here's one of the rascals up on the turret!"

"Scipio, see if you can talk with him," said Dick, turning to the cook.

"Yes, sah!" and Scipio drew back the bar and raised the door of the turret.

The pirate was sitting on it, and, when he felt the door opening under him, he gave a yell and plunged into the sea, frightened nearly out of his life.

But a moment later they heard Scipio talking to him in a jaw-breaking jargon, and shortly after the pirate climbed back upon the back of the torpedo-boat.

"What does he say, Scip?" Dick asked, after listening some five minutes to their jargon.

"Says dat was er pirut," replied Scipio.

"Did they have any gold on board?"

Scipio asked the rascal, and then replied to Dick's query:

"Yes—say dere was ten kags ob gold in de hold."

"Whoop!" yelled Harry. "Let's go down and see if we can't find some of it."

"Bring that fellow inside here, Scipio. We are going down."

"Why not let him swim ashore, which is but a mile away?" Ivanoff asked.

"Can he swim, Scip?"

"Yes, sah."

"Swim ashore?"

"No, sah."

"Why not?"

"Shark git 'em."

"Ah! are they about?"

"Yes—eatin' 'em now, sah."

Dick shuddered.

The idea of being eaten by a shark was a horrible one to our hero.

"Well, I'll put him ashore."

And he turned the boat toward the shore.

When near enough to permit his doing so with safety, the pirate sprang off and waded out on to the beach.

The Little Wonder then went back to the spot where the piratical craft had been destroyed and sunk to the bottom—a depth of eighty feet.

"Now three of us can go out there," said Dick, "whilst one remains to take care of things. Less than that would be very dangerous on account of the sharks. Take along those trigger dynamite cartridges, and we'll be able to keep 'em off."

Armed with the dynamite cartridges, which were fastened to the end of a stick six feet long, with a trigger attachment for exploding them, the three went out in diving-suits.

Harry remained on board to take charge in Dick's absence.

They were soon out among the wreck of the craft.

The bottom was hard gravel, and they had little difficulty in finding the heavy parts of the vessel.

Whilst two worked on the wreck in quest of the kegs, the third one kept a watch over them to keep off the sharks.

Dick soon found a keg.

It was shattered so badly that half the contents had been spilled out.

But half of a keg of gold was a prize to them, as it amounted to several thousand dollars.

By the aid of Ivanoff Dick succeeded in getting the keg in the open door of the torpedo-boat, where they left it and went in quest of more.

They found some of the gold coins scattered about, the explosion having wrecked the kegs as well as the vessel.

At last they found two kegs lying side by side which had not been injured.

From the weight of them they knew that their contents were valuable.

Dick and Ivanoff began to roll them toward the boat, when Scipio's movements excited their attention.

They looked around and saw an enormous shark circling around them, watching his chance to get a snap at one of them.

Of course, they could not work with such a monster as that circling around in quest of a meal, so they dropped the kegs and took their dynamite cartridges, and stood on the defensive.

He soon came round in search of Scipio, who was on the lookout for him.

Quick as a flash the black cook thrust the cartridge right into the half open mouth of the shark.

The terrible jaws closed on it and a frightful explosion followed.

The shark was torn to pieces and sank to the bottom, and the others, as if terrified, sped away out of sight and were seen no more.

Our heroes then got the two kegs inside the door, after which they

followed, pumped the water out, and entered the main room to put off their diving-suits.

On examination of the kegs they were found to contain about five thousand dollars each, except the broken one, which had nearly three thousand dollars still intact.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN THE DARDANELLES AND BOSPHORUS.

THE finding of so much treasure in the wreck of the piratical craft induced our heroes to make another search.

But the explosion had scattered the gold as it had scattered the timbers of the vessel, and they were able only to pick up a few coins here and there.

Two hours of such fruitless work caused them to desist, and they all made their way back into the boat, where they soon had off their suits.

"Well, this pays well for the trouble," said Dick, as he eyed the pile of good yellow gold before him.

"Yes, indeed. I'd like to strike a few more pirates like that one before we reach the Black Sea," said Ivanoff, whose eyes glistened as he looked at the treasure.

"I'd like to take the contract of clearing the Mediterranean of pirates," said Dick, "if all of them panned out as well as this one did."

"Yes, so would I," said Harry.

"Well, how shall we divide this money—or does it belong to us?" Ivanoff asked.

"It belongs to us, I guess," replied Dick, "and I am willing that we all four share alike in the distribution of it."

"Oh, golly!" exclaimed Scipio, "made er fortune at las'."

"Do you call three thousand dollars a fortune, Scip?"

"Yes, sah. Nebber had free hundred dollars afore in my life."

"What are you going to do with so much money?"

"Put it in er bank an' keep it dar."

"Sensible," replied Dick. "Harry, you and the lieutenant count the pile and divide it into four equal parts, and let every man take care of his own share."

Harry and Ivanoff went to work counting the gold, whilst Dick and Scipio attended to the running of the vessel.

The course lay along the African coast toward Egypt for a couple of days, and then Ivanoff, who was more of a sailor from a scientific standpoint than Dick or Harry, consulted the chart and took their bearings. They were just south of the Aegean Sea, and so they tacked northward and entered the great Archipelago of the ancient Greeks.

Small craft of every description were seen sailing to and fro, laden with the commerce of the islands that decked the beautiful sea in every direction.

But our heroes were careful to keep concealed as much as possible, and so about half the time during daylight was spent under water.

But in the evening when the stars decked the heavens and were reflected in the waters of that beautiful sea, the Little Wonder floated on the surface of the most famous sea in the world's history.

Dick was full of the historic lore of ancient Greece, and during the greater part of the evening he talked of the old heroes of the Illiad.

But by and by the half of the crew went to bed to sleep till their time came to take charge of the vessel, and only two were left to talk over the history of the past.

The next day they entered the Dardanelles, and much as our heroes

desired to look at the old forts and castles on both shores, they were obliged to go under the surface of the water through the entire strait.

But they soon entered the sea of Marmora, and there they had a breathing spell, for they could see vessels too far away to notice them.

"This is one of the most beautiful sheets of water in all the world," remarked Dick, "and some day I intend to sail through it in a way that will give me a chance to admire its beauties."

"Yes," said Ivanoff, "and this is the most beautiful season of the year in this latitude."

"Well, I can't see much of it on this trip," remarked Dick. "There comes a large vessel from above. We must get under the water again."

They went down about thirty feet under the water to make sure that they did not strike the bottom of some huge merchantman, and pushed on up through the Sea of Marmora till they entered the Bosphorus—the narrow strait that connected the Black Sea with the great seas south of it. On either side was historic ground.

On the right was Asia. On the left Europe—only that narrow stream separating them.

But while he thought of all these things our hero could not look upon them.

To be seen in those waters would raise a great question that might lead to a bloody war.

On, on he sped, conscious that he was passing under the minarets of Constantinople, one of the most famous cities in the world. Yet he dared not show above the surface.

Night came on again, and ere midnight arrived they were out of sight of land in the great Black Sea.

"We are all right now," said Dick. "We are in Russia again."

"Yes," said Ivanoff, "and Russia is able to take care of her own against the world."

"So she is. She is the great balance to the rest of Europe," remarked Dick. "Her future will have more influence upon Europe than any other country."

"Where are we to go now, Dick?" Harry asked, after a pause in the conversation.

"To Sebastopol."

"Who are you to see there?"

"The governor. He has received instructions what to do."

"Have you any letters to him?"

"No, I am to report to him."

"Have you ever been to Sebastopol, Scipio?" Dick asked.

"Ay, sah."

"What kind of a place is it?"

"Strong place. Walls and big guns."

"Yes? A fortified town?"

"Ay, sah."

"Any pretty girls there?"

"Ay, sah."

"Come, Harry, your girl in New York may hear of you," said Dick, laughing good-naturedly.

"I have not forgotten her," Harry returned. "I have been thinking of her ever since I left her."

"Good! I shall have to tell her that when I write to her."

"Just write and tell your wife what you please," said Harry, "and let my girl alone. I can do all the correspondence that is necessary in that quarter."

"How often do you write?"

"Never mind how often I write. I write as many letters as she wants to read, and that's enough."

"Good boy! Stick to your girl, but don't write her that you killed a pirate and took his boodle."

They laughed heartily and then had a long talk over their loved ones at home—in far-away "home of the brave."

CHAPTER XV.

IN SEBASTOPOL—THE GOVERNOR.

Two days later the Little Wonder arrived at Sebastopol, the famous fortified town around which so many bloody battles were fought in the Crimean war.

There were many vessels in the port, the sailors glaring at the little torpedo-boat without having a conception of the true value of its presence in those waters.

Just as soon as they could do so Dick and Ivanoff landed at one of the docks, took a guide from the loafers around, and set out for the headquarters of the governor of the place.

They found him in his office.

He welcomed them with most distinguished consideration, and set wine and refreshments before them.

"Governor," Dick asked through Ivanoff as interpreter, "have you received any instructions for me from St. Petersburg?"

"Yes," replied the governor, "I have received instructions as to what you are to do here, and to-morrow I shall do myself the honor of showing you your task. Where is your vessel?"

"In the port."

"At what pier?"

"I don't know the name of the pier. The guide may be able to tell you."

The guide was called in, and he gave the proper name of the pier, which was a tremendous jawbreaker for our hero.

The governor then appointed an hour the next day when he would go aboard the Little Wonder and take a look at it.

Dick and Ivanoff then went out to take a look at the town, and being in the uniform of naval officers, were treated with much respect everywhere.

Meeting a number of the military officers of the garrison, they were soon in as jolly company as they could wish.

They were received by the officers with great cordiality, and they saw that there was a chance to make themselves comfortable if they had to remain there any length of time.

The next day the governor came down to the pier, and was taken on board by Lieutenant Ivanoff.

He was astonished at the size and shape of the boat.

He had formed no conception of the character of the Little Wonder, but thought she was some kind of a sail boat.

But when he saw that it had neither sails nor smoke-stack he spluttered his surprise in choice Russian.

"How does it go?" he asked.

"I will show you," said Dick.

Standing on the top of the turret, the governor went gliding out of the harbor as though on the back of some great fish.

"Did you sail all around Europe in this thing?" he asked.

"Yes, governor."

"And was out of sight of land?"

"Yes."

He was thunderstruck.

"How are you going to get at the sunken ships in the harbor?"

"Go down to them."

"How?"

"Why, go down to where they lie on the bottom."

"In this boat?"

"Yes."

Again he was dumfounded.

He looked all around to see if he was not dreaming.

"I never heard of this before," he finally remarked.

"No," said Dick. "Sebastopol is not St. Petersburg."

"No," and he wiped huge drops of perspiration from his forehead.

At a motion from Dick Harry closed the turret and lowered it.

Then he touched the button of the outer door, which opened and let in the sea to the apartment designed for it.

The vessel began at once to sink, and the motion convinced the governor that she was going down.

He turned white as a sheet, and looking at Dick, asked:

"Isn't she going down?"

"Yes," answered Ivanoff, "she is going to the bottom."

With a yell of terror the governor made a spring up the steps that led to the door of the turret.

In another moment he would have opened the door and let in the sea, but Scipio sprang upon him like a tiger to prevent him.

The governor was frightened into a state of perfectly savage terror.

Scipio was equally as savage, for he knew that if that steel bolt was shot back but two short inches the sea would rush in and drown every soul on board.

"Hands off!" screamed the governor, in hoarse tones.

"Lef go dar!" called Scipio, pulling at the gubernatorial legs with all his might.

At last he made a supreme effort and brought him down, both rolling over and over on the floor.

The Russian fought like a tiger, but Scipio made short work of him after getting him where he could handle him.

Dick and Ivanoff finally interfered and took him from the clutches of the cook.

But he was in a terrible rage, and demanded the instant punishment of the cook for daring to lay hands on him as he had done.

"Governor," said the lieutenant, "you owe him an apology. He has saved your life and the lives of all of us."

"I'll have him knouted!" exclaimed the governor.

"And I'll have you sent to Siberia for trying to destroy this vessel and all the crew," said Ivanoff, getting out of patience with him. "It was only by violence that you were prevented from doing so. If Captain Sherman so orders I'll put you in irons at once."

The governor was astonished at the language of the lieutenant, and was fearful that he had lost his head.

"What have I done?" he asked, in a bewildered sort of way.

Ivanoff then explained to him that he had come very near destroying the vessel and all on board.

"Had you succeeded in pushing back that bar," he said, "the sea would have rushed in and filled the vessel, for we are now on the bottom in fifty or sixty feet of water."

"My God!" gasped the governor.

"Well, you are alive, are you not, for all that?" Ivanoff asked.

"Yes."

"Well, why can't you take it easy? Don't you think we are as fond of living as you are?"

He did not make any reply to that, but looked from one to the other of the three young men around him, as if to see whether they showed any signs of fear.

"Come here," said Ivanoff. "I want to show you something," and he led him to the lookout where he could see through two inches of

French plate glass the water illumined by the electric light. Fish of every description swam around the boat, blinded by a light such as they had never seen before.

The sight set him wild with astonishment.

He spluttered his rude Russian jargon in ecstatic enthusiasm, and declared that the inventor of that vessel was the greatest inventor the world had ever seen.

By degrees they succeeded in convincing him that he would live to get back to his office, and after that he was happy.

By and by they sent the torpedo-boat back to the surface again, where they elevated and opened the turret.

"Wonderful! Wonderful!" said the governor a score of times, as he looked around at the placid sea, and then at the city some two or three miles away.

They carried him back to his post, and he showered his apologies upon them, tendering the hospitalities of his house to them.

His stories about the Little Wonder soon spread all over the city, and long before night two or three thousand people were crowded down on the docks eager to get a look at the wonderful vessel.

"We must be very watchful here," suggested Dick to Harry and Ivanoff, "as there may be some Nihilists here as well as in the capital."

"Yes. We must let no people come on board unless we know who they are," said Harry.

"How about the military officers of the garrison?" Ivanoff asked.

"Oh, we must not allow any visitors on board at all," said Dick.

"The army has a great many Nihilists, you know."

"Very well. We shall refuse to allow any visitors on board."

"Yes; that's the best rule."

During the day Scipio told Dick that there were some very fine oysters in some parts of the Black Sea.

"Then we want some of them," said Harry.

"Yes; we'll try our luck this afternoon."

But though they spent the whole afternoon in search of them, they found but few.

Satisfied that there must be some fine ones somewhere about, Dick resumed the search the next day, and by noon had come across a bed that had never been disturbed.

Such immense oysters they were! So fat and fine flavored!

They secured several bushels of them, and sent part of them to the governor, who immediately reported the fact to all the officers of the garrison.

On the same day the governor gave Dick the instructions he had received from St. Petersburg.

Dick read them over carefully, and saw that he was really to destroy the hulls of the great ships that had been sunk in the harbor entrance.

Securing a pilot to show him where the sunken ships lay, he went the next day to make an examination.

The Little Wonder was settled on the bottom within fifty feet of one of the hulks, and Dick in his diving-suit, went out to make an inspection.

He reached the ship and was about to ascend the side of it, when a human skeleton rolled off the deck and rested on top of his head, moving as though it still had life. He shrank back with a shudder, and turned to escape from it.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FIGHT FOR LIFE IN THE BLACK SEA.

THOUGH the skeleton did not come in contact with him, on account of the diving-suit, yet he could see it plainly as it floated over the side of the ship and dropped down on the top of his head.

The idea of having a dead man's bones floating down on him, and finding a resting-place on his head, filled him with horror.

For a minute or two all the ghost stories he had ever heard came trooping through his mind, and in imagination he saw whitened skeletons dancing all around him.

To get rid of the unwelcome burden he reached up and seized the leg of the skeleton and pulled it down.

The leg came off, and he cast it down with a shudder that shook him from head to foot.

As he was reaching for the remaining bones the skull came off the neck and floated down to his feet, followed by the rest.

"Ugh!" he ejaculated. "This is pleasant, indeed," and he moved away as if glad to get rid of the unpleasant companionship of the dead.

But he soon recovered from the shock and returned to the ship, where he succeeded in climbing up on the deck.

Then he ascertained what had caused the skeleton to play him such a trick.

A big shark was prowling around on deck. He had pushed the skeleton over the side of the ship, and it had fallen on Dick's head.

The shark was a big one, and on seeing his domain invaded, showed fight at once.

He came at Dick as if to make sure that he was something good to eat. Being satisfied on that score, he proceeded to circle around him, as if to get up an appetite.

Dick did not come out to give a shark a dinner.

On the contrary, he brought a dynamite cartridge with trigger attachment with him, and held it in readiness to give the brute a touch whenever the time came.

But the shark seemed to be getting up an appetite, for he circled round and round till our hero's patience was exhausted, and he resolved to bring things to a focus.

Watching his opportunity, he thrust the cartridge at the head of the shark. The voracious fish snapped it up as quick as a flash.

The next moment the cartridge exploded, and the shark was torn to pieces.

"That settles him," said Dick. "I only hope that there are no more like him around here. But if there are, they had better move away, for dynamite is not good for 'em."

Dick walked about the deck of the ship, and looked for the best places for the explosives that were to be used in destroying it.

That point settled, he went back to the torpedo boat, and entered it the usual way.

"I killed the biggest shark out there," he said to Harry and Ivanoff, "that I ever saw. He belonged to the shovel-nose family. I offered him a cartridge, and he snapped it so quickly that I was almost as much surprised at the explosion as he was."

Harry laughed, and said:

"You want to look out for those fellows. If one should give you a snap from behind, you would never know what ailed you."

"I want you to go out with me when I go again," said Dick.

"When do you go out again?"

"After I have had something to eat. I am as hungry as a shark,

and I don't know why I should be either. Give me a dozen of those oysters, Scip."

Scipio soon had the delicious bivalves before him, and when he had eaten them he remarked to Harry and Ivanoff:

"Do you know I had the worst scare out there that I ever had in all my life?"

"What caused it?"

"A skeleton."

"A skeleton!"

"Yes—a human skeleton."

Harry and Ivanoff looked their surprise, and he added:

"Just as I reached the side of the ship and looked up, a skeleton floated over the top and fell down on my head. It startled me, and I moved away as quickly as I could. The ghastly thing clung to me. I seized a leg to pull it away. The leg came off at the knee, and I was about to seize the other one, when the head dropped off and fell at my feet, after which all the other bones followed."

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Harry; "the old hulk must be haunted!"

"No," said Dick, "I thought so too, at first, but I found out afterwards that the big shark had pushed the skeleton overboard as he was prowling around on the deck."

"Ah! That may account for it," said Ivanoff; "but I don't like the story at all. You want to be on the lookout. That shark may not be the only danger about. The cuttle fish lives in these waters, and likes to hide in dark holes and sheltered places. There may be one or more in the ship. Be careful how we go about the hatchway."

"I am glad you told me that," said Dick, "for I came very near entering one of the windows of the ship."

Harry and he were soon ready to go out again, and proceeded at once to take out a big torpedo to attach to the prow of the Little Wonder. Both carried cartridges for protection against sharks and other foes.

The first thing to do was to affix the torpedo to the point of the boat, and then they proceeded to examine the hull of the sunken ship.

As they stood on the deck of the open hatchway a long ribbon-like thing came up from the depths below, and fastened around Harry's leg with a vise-like grip.

Harry tried to shake it off by a vigorous kick.

He might as well tried to shake off his foot.

He tried to move away from the spot, but that slender arm held him as with the strength of a ship's cable.

Then another one came out like a flash and caught him round the other leg; a moment later another one caught him on the shoulder.

Dick whipped out his knife and cut the one that had caught Harry's shoulder.

But the moment it was severed another one took its place. Dick severed that one too.

Then Harry felt himself drawn into the hold by a power he could not resist.

He could not speak so as to be heard, but he turned to Dick and caught hold of him as if to have support.

Dick looked down and saw the head and horned beak, together with the great, staring eyes, of an immense octopus.

Quick as a flash he thrust a dynamite cartridge against the monster and pulled the trigger.

A frightful explosion followed, which gave our heroes such a shock as to stun them almost to insensibility.

When they pulled themselves together again they found that Harry's legs were free.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BLOWING UP OF THE HULKS—DICK RESCUES A JEW FROM A RUSSIAN MOB.

THEY assisted each other to their feet, and were about to move away for the purpose of going back to the torpedo and blow up the ship, when Harry suddenly stopped and pointed to a black cloud that was arising from the hold.

Both of them knew what caused it. The ink-bag of the cuttle-fish had been destroyed by the cartridge, and it was blackening the water.

But there were other cuttle-fish in the hold, and the explosion had startled them so much that every one of them began to discharge their inky fluid in order to escape under cover of it.

A big fellow came scrambling up from the depths of the hold and was rapidly making off, when Harry struck him with his cartridge.

The explosion tore the fish all to pieces and raised such a quantity of inky black water that they were forced to retreat to the end of the ship in order to get away from it.

At last they made their way back to the Little Wonder, entered and took off their diving-suits.

"We are now ready to give the old hulk a waking up," said Dick, and he touched a button that pumped out water enough to enable the boat to float a few feet above the bottom.

"Now, look out!" he said, and the torpedo was shoved against the hull of the sunken ship.

The explosion that followed threw a big column of water to an immense height.

But the hulk was torn all to pieces and lay scattered around, a complete wreck.

Hundreds of dead fish floated on the surface of the water.

They had to go to the surface themselves to wait for the muddy waters around the spot to settle, and the moment the Little Wonder made her appearance the vessels in the harbor saluted her with guns and wild cheering.

Dick returned to the city to wait till the morrow to blow up the next one, and received the congratulations of the governor on his success.

Many officers asked permission to go down with her on the next trip, but he had to refuse them.

"It's against positive orders, and I dare not take the risk."

"Whose orders are they?" a young captain asked.

"They came from St. Petersburg."

That was enough.

They knew that the governor would not permit him to violate his instructions.

"After my work here is done," he said, "I may find a way to give you all a chance to take a trip in her."

The next day another ship was blown to pieces and an examination of the first one made. The work was complete—the pieces of the wreck being scattered about promiscuously.

The blowing up of the seven ships took two weeks.

One of the sunken ships required two torpedoes to remove everything out of the way of navigation.

The work being done, the Little Wonder rested about a quarter of a mile off from the shore.

Dick gave Harry and Ivanoff a day off to visit the famous city, and remained on board with Scipio during their absence.

They returned in the evening, having enjoyed the day off very much indeed.

The day following Dick went into the city with Scipio as an interpreter.

He had not been a half hour in the city ere he saw a great commotion in one of the streets through which he was passing.

"What are they doing, Scip?" he asked, not being able to understand a word of the gibberish going on around him.

"Dey is er beatin' er Jew," said Scipio, with a grin.

"Beating a Jew! What for?"

"For fun, maybe."

"Do you know that?"

Scipio darted into the crowd and remained there a few minutes, after which he returned, saying:

"Beatin' er Jew. Dey don't like er Jew in Russia."

The poor Jew was begging and pleading for mercy, and the crowd was hooting, howling and casting stones at him.

Dick did not believe in mobs.

On the contrary he was a believer in law and order.

Drawing his sword, he ordered Scipio to keep up with him, and made a dash into the crowd.

The crowd made way for him.

He had on the uniform of a naval officer, and carried a drawn sword in his hand.

Reaching the side of the poor half-dead son of Israel, he prodded a fierce-looking Russian who was beating him with the point of his sword.

The Russian glared at him in utter amazement.

"Leave the man alone, you coward!" said Dick, and Scipio repeated his words promptly in good Russian.

The Russian sang out:

"He is a Jew!"

Scipio repeated his words.

"What if he is? He is a man, created by God as well as you, and has as much love of life, and as much right to it, as you or any other man in Russia."

The crowd howled with disgust that a man wearing the uniform of an officer of the czar should stoop so low as to defend a Jew.

Scipio repeated what he heard in the hubbub, and Dick waved his sword above his head, saying:

"He is a man—a subject of the czar, and the man who touches him again I'll kill on the spot. It is brutal to thus treat any human being. If he has violated the law, take him before a tribunal and there have him punished."

"But he is a Jew?" cried the bully who had been beating him.

"Well, what of that? You are a fool, and therefore as bad as he is. A Jew is a man as well as a Russian, and that's all there is to it."

He finally dispersed the mob by making the majority feel ashamed of themselves, and overawing the others by his uniform and the sword he carried in his hand.

The poor Jew was then escorted to his home, where he was profuse in his thanks to his heroic preserver.

Dick went to see the governor and report the case to him.

The governor merely smiled and said:

"He was a Jew."

"But have the Jews no rights in Russia?" our hero asked.

"Well, the people don't like them."

"That may be, but have they no protection under the laws of Russia?"

The governor merely gave a French shrug of his shoulders.

"Well, were I the governor of the province," said Dick, "I'd hang half the people in it till the other half learned that one man has as much right to live as another."

"It won't do to have all the people down on you," remarked the governor.

"Teach them to do as they would like to be done by, and you would have no trouble with them whatever," said Dick.

The governor smiled, shrugged his shoulders, and remarked:

"You haven't lived very long in Russia, captain."

"No," said Dick. "If I have to stay here very long I shall ask the czar to make me a governor, that I may have a chance to teach the people how to respect the individual rights of each other."

CHAPTER XVIII.

A TRAGEDY AT ODESSA.

Dick returned to the Little Wonder, and spent the night planning a way to kill time till orders should come from St. Petersburg for him.

At last he resolved to make a voyage around the entire coast of the Black Sea, in the absence of anything else to do.

He proposed the plan to Harry and Ivanoff, and they at once approved of it.

"It will give us a chance to see more of this part of the world," said Dick.

The governor was notified of their desire to make the trip, and he gave them a commission that would give them an official status in all the ports of the Black Sea.

The next day they started out for Odessa, the greatest grain market of Southern Europe, going directly northward along the coast.

All day long they skimmed the coast of the Crimea, the peninsula where the great conflict that culminated at Sebastopol raged when England, France and Turkey warred against the czar.

The country was low and flat, relieved now and then by a bold bluff.

Ships of every description were going and coming laden with the commerce of Southern Europe, nearly all bound to or from Odessa.

They reached Odessa in time, and Dick and Ivanoff went ashore to look at the town and present letters of introduction to the mayor of the city:

That official received them with great cordiality, and said to Ivanoff:

"An officer in the civil service [asked me yesterday if the Little Wonder had arrived."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, and I told him that I didn't know that you were coming here at all. I am very glad to see you."

Ivanoff told Dick what the mayor had said, and the young captain replied:

"That is a strange thing. Nobody knew that we were coming to Odessa but the Governor of Sebastopol."

"Oh, it may have been telegraphed from there that you were going to sail round the entire coast of the Black Sea," suggested Ivanoff.

"Well, I am sorry for that," said Dick, "for in that case we will have to keep clear of the Turkish coast."

They rode round through the city to get some idea of its immense grain trade, and then went back to the Little Wonder, which was waiting for them at one of the piers.

When they returned Harry said to Dick:

"There are Nihilists in this place, Dick."

"How do you know that?"

"I have seen them."

"Where?"

"On the pier there."

"How do you know they were Nihilists?"

"By their looks and actions."

"What did they do?"

"They gazed at the boat with great curiosity, whispered among themselves, nodded their heads and gave us looks of intense hatred. They may not have been Nihilists, but if not then I have received a false impression which I cannot shake off my mind."

"Oh, there are Nihilists in every town in Russia," remarked Ivanoff. "We have got to be on our guard all the time if we would not be caught napping."

"How long did they stay?" Dick asked of Harry.

"About a half hour, I guess."

"Would you know them again?"

"Yes, every one of them. I took a good look at the face of every one of them as they stood there on the pier."

"Well, we'll wait awhile and see if they will come back again."

"But we want to get further back from the pier."

"Yes," and they waited about to see if the strangers would put in their appearance again.

When the sun went down Dick moved back about a quarter of a mile from the pier and waited for the Nihilists.

When midnight came they had seen nothing of them, and so they sank to the bottom to sleep undisturbed till morning.

At sunrise they moved back to the very spot where they had seen the Nihilists the day before, and dropped anchor.

An hour later the Nihilists came down to the pier, and seemed to be greatly astonished at finding the torpedo-boat there.

"Dem fellows hab got bombs in dere pockets," said Scipio, after gazing at the crowd a few minutes.

"How do you know that, Scip?" Dick asked.

"Jes' look at dere pockets. Dey bulge out in big lumps, and dey doan't crowd agin each udder."

"By George!" exclaimed Harry, "that's a fact. Just look for yourself, Dick."

Dick and Ivanoff did look, and the suspicious circumstances alluded to were very plain.

"Yes," said Dick, "they undoubtedly have bombs, and if one of them should be dropped down over here on this turret it would be the last of us and the boat, too."

"Well, let's get back from here."

"Harry," said Dick, "run below and turn her back away from here."

Harry lost no time in doing as he was told, and in another minute the boat was gliding away from the dangerous spot.

She had not moved but a few fathoms ere the villains discovered that she was getting away from them.

It caused a commotion among them, and one of them stepped forward and hurled a bomb as big as an ordinary cocoanut at the boat.

"There it comes!" cried Dick, his face pale as death for the moment.

The bomb fell in the water some forty feet in the wake of the boat, and exploded with a report that was deafening.

The concussion knocked Dick and Ivanoff clear off the turret into the water.

A moment or two later the crack of a rifle was heard, followed by the explosion of a bomb on the pier in the midst of the Nihilists.

The bomb was in the hand of one who was about to throw it, and Scipio had sent a bullet through it from the turret below deck.

Such a frightful explosion and destruction as followed was indescribable. Every man in the party was blown to fragments, and the pier itself was wrecked completely.

Dick and Ivanoff swam back to the turret and climbed up on top

again. They did not know that Scipio had fired that shot from the turret that had caused the destruction on the pier.

Harry rushed up the steps, and pulling his head up through the door, saw Dick and Ivanoff crawling up out of the water.

"Are you hurt?" he asked of Dick.

"I don't know whether I am all here or not," he replied, feeling all over himself in quest of hurts.

"If I am not hurt or killed," said Ivanoff, "I am very badly frightened."

Harry laughed and said:

"Come below and change your clothes. I guess you ain't quite dead yet. But those fellows on the pier are in a bad way."

They followed his advice, and down in the main room of the boat learned of what Scipio had done.

Dick grasped the cook's hand and said:

"Scip, old man, I'll ask the czar to give you a pension. You have saved the boat again."

"Reckon I sated myself, too, capen," said Scipio, grinning. "I didn't tink ob de czar. Dem Nihilists cain't come er frowin' dere bombs at dis byer nigger, dey cain't!"

"Sink her to the bottom, Harry," said Dick, "and let's get things in shape before any one comes prowling around asking for information."

Harry quickly obeyed, and the boat sank to the bottom after the turret was duly lowered.

Dick and Ivanoff changed their wet clothes for dry ones, and while doing so Dick said to the Russian officer:

"After this thing we had better go back to Sebastopol and wait there for instructions from St. Petersburg. I am afraid we have done wrong in leaving there as we did."

"Perhaps we had better return," remarked Ivanoff, "though I don't think we have done wrong in leaving."

When they were ready to do so they rose to the surface of the water, to find the piers and docks black with people, drawn there by the two tremendous explosions.

Somehow the report was out that the boat had been destroyed and sunk by the bombs, but when she was seen again a tremendous excitement followed.

An officer in splendid uniform waved a paper at Dick and Ivanoff, and called out in Russian:

"A dispatch for Captain Sherman!"

They ran the boat alongside the pier, and were handed a telegraphic dispatch from the governor of Sebastopol, which had been sent to the care of the mayor of Odessa, and read as follows:

"Return here at once. Orders from the war office awaiting you."

The governor's name was officially signed to the dispatch, and on reading it, Dick turned to Harry and said:

"Back to Sebastopol at once!"

The Little Wonder glided away from the pier at once and struck a southerly course for Sebastopol.

The crowd looked on without cheering—a sort of a sullen silence falling upon the vast multitude which had gathered there.

"Just look at that, Harry!" said Dick. "Not a cheer from all that crowd! Where are the friends of the czar?"

Harry shook his head, but did not say anything. He did not wish to make any comments in the hearing of Ivanoff.

CHAPTER XIX.

DICK RETURNS TO ST. PETERSBURG.

On the way back to Sebastopol our hero was not in such lively spirits as he had been up to the last few days. He had seen and heard many things in Russia since he entered the service of the czar that had given him food for thought.

In the fullest sense of the word he was American in thought and feeling, a believer in both personal and political freedom, such as he had been accustomed to in his own native land.

Yet he now found himself in the service of the strongest personal government in the Christian world, where the happiness and prosperity of over eighty millions of people depended on the will and actions of one man, instead of a code of laws or a constitution. A ukase from the czar was the only law for the government of the people till another one was issued to take its place.

He had no thought of these things till he saw over ten thousand people at Odessa witness the departure of the Little Wonder, the pet of the czar, without a single cheer to show their loyalty.

That fact spoke volumes to his mind, and he could not help thinking of the contrast between his own land and that of Russia.

At an American port the crowd would have cheered itself hoarse over the gallant Little Wonder and the pluck of her crew.

In Russia only one man ruled.

In America the people ruled, and the president was only their servant to do their will, not their master.

He was thinking of these things and debating in his mind whether or not he was doing right in riveting the chains that clanked on the people of Russia, as he was helping to do in the service of the czar.

"The Nihilists have condemned me to death," he said to himself, as he sat thinking over the situation, "because they believe this boat to be the right arm of the czar in Russia. I shall resign as soon as I think Ivanoff is competent to command her. If my wife knew that I have such a sentence hanging over me she would never rest till she had me safe back on Long Island."

They reached Sebastopol the next day, and dropped anchor near the pier where they had formerly stopped. Dick immediately reported to the governor, accompanied by Ivanoff, who exclaimed on seeing him:

"Ah! you got my dispatch! You are ordered to report at St. Petersburg without delay."

"Then I shall be off within an hour. Will you telegraph that fact to the authorities there?"

"Yes."

"Then good-by," and Dick and Ivanoff shook hands with the governor as they took leave of him.

They made some purchases in the city and then returned to the boat.

"We are to return to St. Petersburg at once," said Dick, as he met Harry on board.

"So we won't escape the hard winter after all?"

"No, it seems not."

"Well, I am sorry, that's all."

"So am I."

"We may be sent to even a milder climate than the Black Sea," remarked Ivanoff. "There's no telling what diplomacy may develop on the European chess board. It may be that our presence in the Black Sea has accomplished its purpose."

"Well, I hope that no harm will come of it," said Dick.

"So do I, but we may never know the part we have played in the game of European politics."

Everything being in readiness, the bow was turned southward to Constantinople and the Bosphorus.

The next day after leaving Sebastopol the sea became very rough, and later a storm came on. They were compelled to go below the surface to avoid the angry waves.

This rough weather lasted two days, till they reached the Bosphorus.

In the narrow channel the water was comparatively smooth and yet they dared not show up for fear of being seen by the Turks, who would have made a hullabaloo over the fact.

So they glided down the Bosphorus, past the magnificent city of Constantinople toward the sea of Marmora, without once rising to the surface.

In the little sea of Marmora they came up for a breathing spell, and then went on their way till the presence of a sail compelled them to go below again.

Entering the Dardanelles, they sped along toward the Ægean sea, so famous in ancient history.

Once in that beautiful sea, among the primitive craft that sailed to and fro in every direction, they rose to the surface and went speeding on their way without any fear of making trouble.

Down the Ægean into the Mediterranean Sea they sailed, meeting many a craft that passed them without notice.

Out into the broad and deep sea, however, their presence out of sight of land would be noticed and inquired into. Hence they were careful about being seen by any vessels of the great powers.

Of course the ships of one nation had as much right to sail the seas as another, yet the czar did not wish to have the fact that the torpedo-boat had been through the Bosphorus known in the courts of Europe.

On the way back they passed the Island of Malta—that strong fortress in the sea which had once been the great stronghold of the Knights Templar in the days of the Crusades. It now belonged to England, and a number of famous iron-clad ships rode at anchor in the port.

"Ah," thought Dick, as he gazed at the great floating monsters, "they are the terrors of the sea, but the Little Wonder can send them to the bottom in a very few minutes."

"Yes," said Harry, as Dick uttered the last sentence aloud, "the Little Wonder is worth a dozen iron-clads in defending a port by destroying vessels, but isn't worth much in fighting forts on land."

"Well, no, not much," returned Dick. "There would be but little need of forts to guard ports if one or two torpedo-boats like this one were in every harbor."

"Just what I think. Why not sell Uncle Sam a torpedo-boat for every port on the Atlantic coast when you go home?"

"Because they won't buy them till they need them," was the reply. "You see, we are so far removed from the fear of European entanglements that one hundred years may pass without any breach of the peace between any European power and Uncle Sam."

"Yes, I guess you are right."

"I know I am. We don't want a big standing army or very much of a navy. I believe I could build and sell them to England, France, Spain, Italy and other powers, though, and I shall think about it when I go back home."

The great iron-clads at Malta were soon left far behind, and the Little Wonder sped on its way to Gibraltar, the greatest fortress in the world.

Dick had not forgotten the excitement his presence near Gibralt-

ar, excited among the English vessels only a few weeks before, and he resolved to go by without being seen.

Accordingly, when he came in sight of the great rock, he prepared to go below as soon as the Little Wonder was near enough to be seen from the deck of any ship.

But the sun went down ere they came in close range of the British vessels, and the torpedo-boat was not under the necessity of sinking out of sight at all.

They passed within gunshot range of the fortress and a number of English men-of-war without being seen.

The next morning they were at least one hundred and fifty miles away, speeding toward the colder regions of the north.

In due time they reached St. Petersburg, and as they entered the port they were greeted by a number of Russian war-ships.

"Sorry I haven't a gun to give 'em a salute in return," said Dick.

"Yes, so am I. But what does so many war-vessels assemble here for?" and Harry looked up at Ivanoff for an answer to the question.

"I don't know," the Russian replied. "I am afraid that it means war somewhere."

CHAPTER XX.

DICK'S WIFE ARRIVES.

Just as soon as he could get on shore Dick reported to the office of the war minister.

He was greeted cordially.

"You did your work well, captain," said the minister, "and the czar is well pleased. The governor of Sebastopol gave a good report of your work."

"I am glad to hear that, sir," replied Dick. "I tried to do my duty as I understood it."

"Yes, so you did. You were not seen in the Bosphorus."

"No. We were under the surface all the way through to the Sea of Marmora, where we came up for a breathing spell."

"Very well. You have done your work better than you are aware of."

"Thanks. What have I to do now?"

"Simply to await orders."

Dick was about to take leave of the minister, when the latter's secretary laid some letters on the table in front of him.

"These are for you, captain," said the minister, taking up several of the letters and handing them to Dick.

They were all from America, and the most of them from his wife. Some were for Harry.

Dick hastened to read the letters from home, and in another office sat down to a table and began to peruse them.

"Ah!" he ejaculated, as he read one of them; "she is coming with our boy. They are now on the ocean. God bless and give them a fair voyage!"

He kissed the letter, and then hastened to let the war minister know that his little family was coming to join him in Russia.

"I am glad to hear that," said the minister. "You will want quarters where they can be comfortable?"

"Yes," said Dick.

"I have apartments in my house that you are welcome to use."

"Thanks, sir. You are kind indeed. I was going to ask where I could get good quarters."

Dick hastened back to the boat to give Harry his letters, and tell him that Mrs. Sherman and son were then on their way to Russia.

"She is making a mistake, Dick," said Harry. "Cold weather is coming on, and a winter in St. Petersburg is as bad as at the North Pole."

"I never thought of that," said Dick. "I suppose she didn't, either. Well, if it gets too cold here, I'll get a furlough and leave you in charge while we go to Italy for the winter."

"That will leave me out in the cold," remarked Harry.

"Yes, but your time will come some day, you know," and Dick prodded his ribs with a finger.

"Yes, and I don't care how soon it comes."

"Oh, you'll have to wait a bit for promotion, I guess."

"Well, I won't wait long."

A few days later Dick received a dispatch from his wife that she would reach the city the next day, and he made preparations to meet her at the train.

Harry went with him, leaving Ivanoff in charge of the Little Wonder, with Scipio as assistant.

When the train arrived Dick and Harry made a rush for the cars, but a guard pushed them back, and would not allow them to enter the room where the passengers were landed until certain formalities had been complied with.

Dick was astonished that his uniform and the cross of Ivan did not have more effect upon the railroad officials.

But ere he had time to solve the riddle his wife caught sight of him and rushed forward, followed by the nurse with the babe in her arms.

"Oh, Dick!"

"Lylah!" and they were clasped in each other's arms in a loving embrace.

Harry gave the happy mother and babe a cordial greeting, and entered the carriage to accompany them to the splendid apartments they were to occupy during their stay in the city.

After seeing them settled in their quarters, Harry hastened back to the boat to join Ivanoff and Scipio.

The cook was on the lookout for him, and soon had the boat alongside the pier.

Harry sprang on board, and the boat moved out into the stream again, where the anchor was dropped and a quiet wait for orders or events began.

While in the house of the Russian war minister Dick learned that when he was so suddenly ordered back from the Black Sea the government was on the verge of a rupture with one of the European powers, and it was thought best to have the Little Wonder in port to defend the capital of the Empire.

But the difficulty had been settled diplomatically, and the war cloud had vanished from the horizon.

Dick was anxious to show his wife around the Russian capital, and hired a carriage for that purpose.

They were driven through the principal streets, where they saw and admired some of the finest buildings of the age.

On their way through certain localities Lylah noticed that many people looked at her husband scowlingly, and she drew his attention to that fact.

"Oh, yes, I noticed it," he said, "but don't mind it. I am used to that now."

"But why do they do it? Surely the Russians do not hate you?"

"They are Nihilists. They do not even know who I am, for I have been on the streets of the city but very little, but they hate the uniform I wear."

"They hate the government, then?"

"Yes—they are the bitter enemies of the government."

"What do they hate the government for?"

"They want a government of their own, I believe, but just what kind I don't think even the wisest of them really know themselves."

"Do you think there will be a war here?"

"Oh, no! They could never muster an army, though there are many thousands in the country."

"Are you not afraid they will do you an injury while you wear that uniform?"

"They would do me an injury if they could, but I take care to keep out of their way as much as I can."

When they returned home they found a note from the chief of police of the city, warning Dick against riding through the city again, as the Nihilists were more active than ever.

"Why, Dick," exclaimed his wife, her eyes opening to their widest, "is it possible that it is not safe for you to ride through the streets of St. Petersburg?"

"Yes, Lylah," he said; "even the czar of all the Russias dare not ride out without a strong guard for his protection."

"Yes, I have heard all about that. But what have they against you?"

"I have command of the most formidable vessel in the Russian Navy, and have been decorated with the cross of Ivan. Oh, they think me an important personage in Russia. They have made several efforts to capture the Little Wonder, and have lost nearly a score of lives in doing so."

She looked at him in the greatest alarm. Her eyes opened wider and wider every moment, till at last she exclaimed:

"Dick, you must resign and go home with me. I wouldn't give you up for all the thrones of Europe!"

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CZAR BLOWN UP.

Dick and his young wife talked the situation over till a late hour that night. He tried to reason away her fears, but he did not succeed in doing so.

"You needn't tell me there is no danger," she said. "The chief of police would not have given you that warning unless the danger was very great. You must resign your position and go home with me."

"It would disgrace me to do so, Lylah," said he.

"Indeed it would not!"

"But I am sure that it would," he said. "It would be said of me in all the papers of the Empire that the Nihilists had run me out of Russia."

"Well, I'd rather have them do that than to print the details of your assassination. You are more to me than all the Russian Empire!"

"Darling," he said, "I cannot possibly be any more dear to you than you are to me. I will think over what you say and try to see the czar to-morrow or the next day, and ask him to accept my resignation, or else send me on duty to some part of the Empire where the Nihilists are not so vindictive or active."

That satisfied her, and the conversation turned on friends at home.

He told her about the fate of Jack Lawler, and she was shocked beyond measure, for she knew some of his people at home.

"Will he ever get away from there, Dick?" she asked.

"No. But few people ever return from Siberia. It is a living tomb."

"Well, I am sorry for it. When his people at home hear of it they will blame you for it, and some of them may try to harm you there out of revenge."

"If they do I'll make short work of them. I've been bothered enough by that tribe!"

The next day Dick went over to the office of the minister of war to see if he could get a chance to have an audience with the czar.

It was impossible to do so that day, and so he came away to pay a visit to the American Minister, with whom he was well acquainted.

On the way he made the discovery that two men were following him.

A hurried inspection told him that one of them at least carried a bomb. He was a savage-looking fellow, and might be one of those desperate fanatics who would sacrifice himself to accomplish his object.

Dick did not feel in the least comfortable, for he could not make himself understood by any policeman, not knowing a word of Russian.

What to do he was at a loss to know. He was pondering over the situation when he saw a Russian officer come along with whom he was acquainted.

"Ah, colonel," he greeted, "I am glad to see you, for I am hunted by Nihilists, and am in need of an interpreter."

"All right," said the colonel, who spoke good English. "Where are your Nihilists?"

"If you will look about twenty paces behind us you will see two men following us," said Dick. "The shorter of the two has a bomb big enough to kill a dozen men. They have been following me ever since I left the war office. I passed several policemen, but could not make myself understood by any of them."

"Well, I'll look after him," said the colonel. "You go down the street."

Dick passed on down the street alone, as the colonel suggested, and the officer stopped to wait for the Nihilists to come up.

When they had passed him the officer followed them till he had met two detectives, to whom he told the story of the two villains who were pursuing young Captain Sherman.

The detectives at once proceeded to arrest them.

But it was a terrible thing to do then and there, for the Nihilist who carried the bomb let it drop the moment the detective tapped him on the shoulder.

Of course the bomb exploded.

The Nihilist and detective were blown to atoms, and several people who were passing at the time were more or less injured.

The other Nihilist escaped by taking to his heels the moment he heard the explosion.

Dick turned back to see the extent of the damage, and was soon surrounded by an immense crowd of eager, excited people.

The police soon came and dispersed the crowd, and Dick turned and went on toward the American Legation.

On the way he found notices of his death sentence in every pocket in his clothes, which had been put there by the Nihilists in the crowd on the street.

"This is pleasant," he said to himself. "If Lylah hears of it she will hurry me out of Russia on the next train, passport or no passport. I'd rather be on board the Little Wonder than live in the finest palace in St. Petersburg. The czar is no safer than I am. He receives these messages every day in the week, I am told."

The Russian papers related the incident of the explosion in the

street, and that evening Dick began receiving congratulations from a number of brother officers in the Navy Department.

By that means his wife found out what had happened, and was terribly excited over the event.

The next day he went out accompanied by a detective.

He called at the war office to see whether or not an interview could be had with the czar that day.

The war minister told him that he would see the czar that evening, and would arrange for him to have an audience with him the next day.

Dick went away, followed by the detective, and walked along through several streets which he had never been in before.

Suddenly he heard a noise ahead of him, and saw the people running out of their houses to look at an open carriage which was coming, surrounded by a small body of horse.

"It's the czar!" exclaimed Dick, and he stopped on the sidewalk to see the ruler of eighty millions of people pass.

Suddenly a bomb was thrown, and it exploded under the czar's horses, one of whom was killed.

The czar sprang out of the carriage, and at the same moment a bomb exploded at his feet. He fell backwards in the arms of an attendant.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE FEARS OF A LOVING WIFE.

WHEN Dick saw the czar fall he sprang forward, sword in hand, and cut down one of the wretches whom he had seen throw a bomb.

He last of all thought of the fact that he, as well as the czar, had been sentenced to death.

"Sire," he said, as he rushed up to the side of the wounded monarch, "I cut down the wretch who threw the second bomb. Would to God I could have reached him before he threw it."

The czar looked up at him and groaned in an agony of pain.

The guard kept back the crowd, and ambulances came for the wounded.

Tenderly they lifted the now dying monarch into the ambulance, and he was conveyed back to the palace, where the royal family and surgeons were instantly summoned.

The city was thrown into a fever of excitement, and strong military guards were thrown out in every part of the capital where crowds might congregate.

It was soon announced that the czar could not live—that he was dying from three frightful wounds.

Dick hastened home to his wife, and as he entered the apartment she sprang up and cried out:

"Dick, what has happened? Why, there is blood on your hand and the hilt of your sword!"

"Lylah, the czar has been blown up and is dying. I slew the man who threw one of the bombs."

She sank down on a sofa almost in a dead faint and gasped out:

"It will be you next!"

"No, darling, they will stop at this, for the whole civilized world will hunt them down."

She buried her face in her hands and rocked to and fro in an agony of suspense.

Dick put his arms around her and tried to console her, but she

would not be consoled. A great, mortal fear was tugging at her heart which she could not shake off.

She would not let him go out of her sight during the day till he was sent for by the war minister, whose messenger said that he was asked for by the czar.

"My darling, I cannot disobey that request," said Dick to his trembling wife. "Believe me, the city is full of soldiers, and every Nihilist is in his hole, satisfied with his diabolical work of to-day. I shall return in an hour or two."

She could not refuse him, and he entered a carriage which was hurriedly driven to the Winter Palace.

He was ushered into the chamber where the dying monarch lay, but the czar had ceased to recognize any one. He was too far gone. His last words were:

"Sasha! Sasha!" a term of affection which he had always used toward his eldest son.

The moment the czar had breathed his last orders were given to the military commander of the city to enforce the strictest military discipline, and to declare martial law till further orders.

As Dick came away from the palace he met the man who was now the Czar of all the Russias.

He immediately saluted him as the father of his people.

The czar gave him his hand and said:

"Your devotion will not be forgotten."

"Sire, my loyalty to Russia is only equaled by the love I bear my own native land."

"I believe you, captain," returned the young monarch, as he turned to enter another room in the palace.

Dick came back to his wife and told her that he was by the bedside of the czar when he breathed his last, and that the dying monarch was unable to recognize any one.

"Oh, this is horrible!" exclaimed Lylah, with a shudder. "The ruler of a great country murdered in the streets of his capital!"

"Yes, indeed," said Dick, "and he was a good man, too. He liberated twenty-two millions of serfs, and now the ungrateful wretches have killed him."

"Why did they do it? What do they want, anyhow?"

"Who can answer that question? Many have tried and failed. They claim many things that in America would be considered reasonable. But, in my opinion, the Russian people are not yet in that condition that would render them capable of self-government."

"Are they trying to be free and independent?"

"They are already free and independent as a nation. Some of them claim that they want a written constitution and a code of laws, so that the people will not have to depend on the will of one man for everything."

"Well, isn't that right, and——"

"Hush—sh! If you have any opinions in Russia not in accord with the government you must not express them, or you will be considered a Nihilist."

"Good Heavens! Can I not express my sentiments to my own husband?"

"Yes, but not when walls have eyes and ears, too."

She looked around in alarm.

"My darling, I see you will never be happy in Russia," said Dick, after a pause of some minutes.

"No—never. We must go back to our dear America. My dream of ambition is over. Give me rest, contentment, and peace and safety for my loved ones in preference to all the pomp and power of kings and queens."

"Those are my sentiments exactly," said Dick. "I would rather

be an humble American citizen, with nothing but a vote, than be a Czar of all the Russias."

The next day Harry came to see Dick, leaving Ivanoff in command of the Little Wonder.

"He is the worst broken up man you ever saw in all your life, Dick," he said, speaking of Ivanoff.

"What's the matter?" asked Dick.

"The death of the czar."

"Oh, yes. He was something of a pet of the czar, I believe."

"Yes, and he says the successor of the czar is an enemy of his, and fears that it may go hard with him in the future."

"Tell him when you go back that the czar is my friend, and that I shall make him his friend also, and see that he is placed in command of the Little Wonder when I leave it."

"Are you going to leave it soon?"

"Yes," replied Dick.

"Where are you going?"

"Back to America."

"The deuce!"

"Yes. My wife insists upon it, and I hold her happiness too dearly to continue in a place that destroys it entirely."

Harry was silent for some minutes, and Dick added:

"You know how I stand with the Nihilists. It is different with you. They have not fallen out with you yet, and may not at all. I shall build another torpedo-boat for the czar for a million dollars, on condition that you are given the command of it."

"Ah! That would make my everlasting fortune, Dick!" exclaimed Harry.

"Yes, I think it would, too, Harry, and no one deserves it more."

"But you won't stay in Russia always, will you, Harry?" Lylah asked.

"Oh, no. My heart is in New York, and my sweetheart, too. You may depend upon it I shall return and get both in the near future."

"Do you ever hear from her?"

"Oh, yes. She writes me every week, and seems to be proud of me. If I could only get to be a captain I'd go after her at once."

"But she wouldn't let you live in Russia if she loved you as I love my husband," said Lylah.

"Oh, I'd give up Russia for her a half dozen times over," said Harry.

Lylah laughed and said:

"I'll tell her that when I go back."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FAIR ENCHANTRESS.

WHEN Harry returned to the Little Wonder he told Ivanoff what Dick had said, and the Russian's hopes were raised considerably thereby.

"Dick was nearby when the czar was blown up," said Harry, "and cut down one of the assassins with his sword. The dying monarch called for him, and when he came was too far gone to know him. The new czar took him by the hand and said that his devotion would not be forgotten. So, you see, he is in a fair way to make you solid with the czar."

"I hope so," said the young officer.

Dick remained secluded with his wife and child for a week, during which time he saw that such admirable precautions had been taken

that no revolutionary proceedings were likely to follow the taking off of the czar.

The fact soon became apparent that the Nihilists were content to wait and see what would be the resulting effects of their terrible crime ere taking any further steps.

By degrees Lylah calmed down, and was no longer so apprehensive for the safety of her husband.

One day Dick decided to pay a visit to Harry and Ivanoff on board the Little Wonder.

He started to walk down to the river front, when a carriage drove up to the sidewalk and a soft feminine voice called to him:

"Captain! Captain!"

He wheeled round, looked, and instantly recognized the beautiful Countess Orloffski.

He saluted her by raising his hat and making a profound bow.

"Please take a seat by my side, captain," she said. "I have much to say to you."

"A thousand thanks, madam," he replied, entering the carriage and seating himself by the side of the beautiful woman.

"I hear that your wife has arrived from America," she remarked. "Is it so?"

"Yes, madam, and my baby son also."

"Ah! You are a happy man, captain."

"Yes, I think so myself," he replied.

"I should have called to pay my respects to your wife, but you did not keep your promise to attend my reception a few weeks ago."

"Did you not receive a message from me two days before your reception to the effect that I had been ordered on a long voyage, and therefore could not attend?"

"I did not."

"I am sorry. I sent it by a mutual friend. When your reception was held I was over three hundred miles out at sea, but I was present in spirit."

"That is a beautiful thought—present in spirit," said the countess, laughing. "but I prefer people in the flesh to people in the spirit. They are much more sociable, I think."

"I quite agree with you," and he laughed pleasantly as he spoke.

"Of course you do. Now tell me, what do you think will be the result of the death of the czar?"

"Why, that his son will reign in his stead," he replied.

She glanced at him in no little surprise, and then exclaimed:

"What a depth of wisdom!"

He smiled.

"Your question was neither definite nor specific," he remarked.

"Are you afraid, like many others, to have an opinion of your own?"

"Oh, no. I have a good many opinions, but wisdom suggests that I keep them for my own use yet awhile."

"Do you like the czar?"

"I do. He is my friend, as his father was, and his enemies are my enemies."

"That is a declaration of loyalty. They tell me that you cut down one of the assassins who threw the bombs at the late czar. Is it true?"

"Yes."

"Then your fortune is made. You can be one of the greatest dignitaries of the empire if you so wish."

"But I do not so wish."

"Indeed!"

"No. I prefer the society of my wife and child to all the honors the czar can heap upon me."

"Ah! you are a loyal husband, I see!" the countess exclaimed.

"Yes, and I have a loyal wife that is in every respect worthy of my devotion. I look forward to the time when I can return to my own country with pleasurable anticipations."

"Do you expect to return soon?"

"No—not in the very near future."

"Well, I am glad to hear that. Do you know, I am surprised that you ever entered the service of Russia."

"Why?"

"Because you cannot speak the language, and the character of the Russian government is the opposite of your own government at home in every respect."

"Do you know that our people have a very friendly feeling toward Russia?"

"No, I did not," she replied.

"Well, they have, because in our great civil war Russia was our sincere friend in many ways, and our people have not forgotten it."

"Yes, yes, of course. But it would have been much more pleasant for you to enter the service of a country whose language you know, and——"

"Yes, if all things else were equal," he replied, interrupting her.

"England, for instance," she remarked.

"England was our enemy during our civil war, and would have rejoiced at our defeat, and there is a strong prejudice against her on that account among our people."

"So I have heard. But do you know that when a war ceases the animosities of the struggle cease with it?"

"Yes, but it takes time for it to cease. Trade and commerce resume their sway, but the prejudice engendered by the war can only be worn away by time itself."

"But your country has not warred with England since 1815."

"That is true. Have you entered the service of England, countess?"

The question startled her, and she turned red and white by turns. She saw a furtive smile playing round the mouth of the young American.

"You are laughing at me," she said.

"Indeed I am not," he replied.

"But I think you are, and you force me to make a confession which I shall trust to your honor as a gentleman to keep secret."

"I hope you will consider that you are not under the necessity of doing such a thing."

"But I am, and my secret is this: I am engaged to marry a certain English nobleman, and my future home is to be in England."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, and now you understand why I am anxious to have you go to England, too. I am very fond of Americans, and more so of you than any I have ever met. There, now, you have my confession and secret."

"It is an important secret," said he, "and I shall guard it with all the silence I can command. But I can give you no answer as to the suggestion you make. Englishmen assume such airs of superiority when dealing with others that I have imbibed a very strong prejudice against them."

"But with a high rank and a great command you would find them all at your feet," she said. "Think of that and give me an answer when we meet again."

Dick promised to do so, and then the carriage stopped for him to

alight, about one block away from the pier off which lay the Little Wonder.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CONCLUSION.

On board the Little Wonder Dick could not help thinking the Countess Orloffski had been hired by Lord S——, the English nobleman, to try her batteries on him to gain his consent to enter the English service. At last he was tempted to accept the offer and name a rank and price that would strain the cupidity of the tight little island to its fullest extent.

But as she had requested an answer at their next meeting, which, to say the least, was indefinite, he had plenty of time in which to make up his mind.

He found everything on board just as he had left it when he went to meet his wife. Ivanoff and Scipio were glad to see him and gave him a cordial welcome.

"How's dat baby, cap'n?" the black cook asked.

"Well and hearty. You must put on your best clothes and come over and see him, Scip."

"Ay, sah, dat I will," and the happy darky grinned all round his face.

Dick then had a talk with Harry and Ivanoff about who should take command of the Little Wonder after he resigned.

"I believe you are fully competent to do so, lieutenant," he said to Ivanoff, "and I shall urge your promotion on the czar. Then, if he will promote Harry to the same grade, I'll build one for him at just one half the price of this one."

Both men were delighted, and expressed their thanks in the strongest language they could command.

"I want you two to succeed," he said, "and I believe this is a good opening for you. If Russia was at war with a naval power, I would not think of leaving her service. But to remain here with a sentence of death by the Nihilists hanging over my head is more than my wife can stand. I have no fears for myself, as you well know by this time, but the suspense would kill her. She can hardly eat or sleep now on account of it, even when we are in our quarters."

"Yes, yes, I understand that," said Ivanoff. "A woman cannot look at such things as a man does. When can you see the czar?"

"That is hard to say. He is occupied by such important matters and individuals at present that it is difficult to say when I can have an audience with him. You may rest assured that I shall do my best for both of you when I do see him."

"When is he to be crowned?" Harry asked.

"I don't think the time has been set yet. It will take place some two or three months hence. They always do such things with a great deal of pomp and ceremony, you know."

"Yes, and it takes time to get things in ship-shape for it," remarked Ivanoff.

After remaining on board an hour or so Dick took leave of them and went back to the pier, the boat gliding up alongside for him to leap ashore.

When he returned to his abode his wife met him in quite a flutter of excitement, saying:

"You have been sent for by the czar, who wants to see you forthwith."

Dick hastened to call a carriage and drove with all haste to the palace.

The guards saluted him as he passed, the cross of Ivan being the magic talisman that opened every door to him.

Many of the great nobles of the empire were present when he entered the room adjoining the audience chamber, and they looked upon him with no little curiosity.

Some of them had heard of him without having seen him or his boat. The fact that he was one of the czar's favorites was enough to send his name throughout all the empire.

Though many of them had come in ahead of him, yet he was summoned into the presence of the monarch soon after his arrival.

There was an eager look in the face of the czar as Dick entered the room. The monarch gave him a keen, searching glance, and said:

"You have been prompt, captain. Have you any objections to telling me what the Countess Orloffski said to you during the ride you had with her to-day?"

"None whatever, sire," Dick replied, greatly astonished at the question. "She used all her endeavors to get me to consent to enter the service of England."

"Ah!"

"I declined to give my consent, but she would not receive my answer there or then, requesting me to think it over and give her an answer at our next meeting."

"When is that to be?"

"No time was appointed, sire."

"What answer have you decided to give her?"

"That under no circumstances will I enter the British service, nor build any vessels for them."

"I thank you for that, captain," said the czar. "Has any one else ever approached you on that subject?"

"Yes, sire, Lord S—— did so on two occasions, and I rebuked him in such terms that he does not speak to me now."

"Ah! He employed her to negotiate with you. Now have you a favor to ask at my hands, captain?"

"Yes, sire," replied Dick. "I pray you to promote Lieutenant Ivanoff to be captain of the Little Wonder, and raise Lieutenant Bolton to the same grade."

"Both requests are granted," said the czar, very graciously.

"Ah! your majesty is pleased to be gracious to-day. I have another prayer that you permit me to return to America to build another torpedo-boat for Captain Bolton to command, so that your majesty may be master of the seas when the title is disputed."

"You can have one year's leave of absence on full pay," said the sovereign, "and can build another boat like the one now here, drawing on the treasurer for all moneys needed therefor. Have you anything else to ask?"

"Nothing, sire, save the blessing of God on the empire and your dynasty," replied Dick, fervently.

He then took leave of the czar and hastened back to his wife to tell her the good news.

She was overjoyed.

"You will still hold your rank and pay," she said, "and yet can remain at home a year?"

"Yes."

"Well, at the end of that time, if you do not wish to return to Russia, you can resign, can you not?"

"Yes, of course."

"That suits me," and she laughed through her tears of joy.

That evening Dick saw the glad, happy look come into his wife's

face again, and he was repaid for the sacrifice he had made for her sake.

The next day Scipio called to pay his respects to Dick and his wife and child.

He had bought a fine suit of clothes to make the call in, and Dick was quick to notice the foresight and good sense of the darky.

He declared the baby the image of his father, and tossed him up several times, to the very great delight of the youngster.

"Scipio," said Dick, as the black was about to leave, "tell Ivanoff and Harry that they were both made captains by the czar yesterday."

"Good Lord! Am dat so?"

"Yes, and I am going back to New York to build another boat for Harry. Harry will go with me; you will remain with the Little Wonder till he returns. The czar knows of what you have done in his service, and will not forget you."

When Scipio told them what Dick had said, Harry and Ivanoff shook hands, and then drank the health of the czar and Dick Sherman.

A few days after Dick's interview with the czar Lord S—— hastily left St. Petersburg, warned away by the chief detective of the city. The Countess Orloffski was banished to her country estate, two hundred miles from the capital, where she was to remain under penalty of death if she attempted to leave.

Dick and his little family, accompanied by Captain Harry Bolton, returned to New York soon after, and began the building of another torpedo-boat.

Harry's rank and pay admitted him into the first circles of society.

His former employer's daughter received him with a cordiality that sent his heart away up in his throat.

The other suitor—the head book-keeper in her father's store—was knocked out completely, and Harry bore off the prize.

The story of the Little Wonder is ended, but our hero exercised his inventive genius on another one that the reader may hear of at some other time.

[THE END].

TERRIBLE EXPERIENCE WITH YELLOW FEVER ABOARD SHIP.

THE long, hot day was over, and with the setting sun had come a breeze, before which the good ship Bristol was steadily slipping through the oily-looking water. Six bells had just been struck; the saloon was almost deserted, and the poop was peopled with weary passengers, reveling in the soft, cool wind and the departure of our enemy, the sun. The main deck was alive with the midship passengers, and the watch on deck, who, mixing indiscriminately, lounged and chatted and smoked and slept as their inclination moved them.

I had come up on the fore-castle-head to enjoy a quiet cigar and to delight my soul with the wondrous beauty of the night. Up here, everything was quiet, and I was alone, save for the man on the lookout, who leaned on the opposite rail as motionless as a statue, and evidently occupied with his own thoughts. Looking aft, the ship was almost in darkness, being shadowed with the mountains of canvas which rose dim and mysterious toward the sky. The murmur of voices was hushed into a kind of lullaby, under whose drowsy music both ship and ocean seemed to be dreaming. Overhead, the tropical stars hung out their white lamps against the violet sky, and set long trails of light glittering across the dark water until they broke in crystal shivers on the hull. The light from the open ports of the saloon looked hot and yellow, and only enticed a dull reflection from the sea. Someone who was playing on the piano in the music room had drifted into the loved strain of "Home Sweet Home," and was sending it stealing out over the sea like a benediction. Round the sharp cut-water the spray was rising in a fairy fountain, whose drops rang like a chime of tiny silver bells as they met the waves again. Down in the cool depths a shoal of fish were playing round the ship's head, looking, as they moved through the phosphorus-laden water, like fish-shaped fragments of solid rainbow gone mad.

Thus I rested and was at peace until my reverie was broken by the sound of footsteps ascending the fore-castle ladder. I turned and was face to face with my cabin companion, Mr. Ralph Stevenson.

"Glorious night, isn't it?" he said.

"Magnificent," I answered, and then added: "It's not only the present delight that I am thankful for, but for the memory it will be in days to come, for you know 'a thing of beauty is a joy forever.'"

"I don't know about that," he rejoined; "it depends wholly on the

circumstances under which one has seen it. Do you know this lovely night has called to my mind one of the most unpleasant incidents in my life?"

"Indeed; what was that?"

"Sit down here on this coil of rope, and if you care to hear it, I will tell you as we smoke."

I gladly accepted his offer, and Stevenson began:

When I was a young fellow, years ago in London, I was in the employ of an uncle of mine who was at the head of a large firm of ship owners. My health had broken down owing to hard work and a severe season, and the doctor ordered me a long rest and a sea voyage. The firm at once gave me the required leave, and shipped me off as sole passenger in one of their best trading clippers. We had a fine passage, and arrived safely in the magnificent harbor of Rio de Janeiro. The port was crowded, and we had to anchor outside and wait our turn to be berthed. We lay for some days, during which the heat was intense, when, all unannounced, there burst over the city and the shipping one of those terrible outbreaks of yellow fever so common there. The disease spread with fearful rapidity, and soon our ship was one among the crowd lying at the quarantine anchorage and flying the hateful yellow flag.

It was terrible to lie day after day on the glassy sea and watch the doomed city through the haze and the ships nearer at hand. Constantly the yellow flags were fluttering down to half-mast, as a signal to the shore boats to come off and take away the bodies for interment. All our crew had deserted at the first, with the exception of the captain, the carpenter, a tall, thin Scotchman from the Clyde, and a black cook named Jacob. These, with myself, formed the whole ship's company. Suddenly the captain was struck down, and by influence we managed to get him taken off to one of the hospitals ashore. Next day Chips—as they always call the carpenter at sea—was laid low. Jacob came and told me that Chips was in his bunk, very bad, so I went on the main deck and visited him. I found him raving in fever. We flew the signal for the doctor. After a while he came off, said it was a bad case, prescribed, gave some directions as to medicine and disinfectants and departed. Jacob and I took turns in watching poor Chips. On the evening of the next day I was pacing

the poop, utterly weary and sick at heart. The red hot sun went down at last, and the stars came out. The night was brilliantly calm and still. The lights on the esplanade of Rio began to twinkle out into the darkness. Far above them, on the overhanging terraces, clusters of light, marking the position of countless villas, hung on the blackness of the steep background like diamonds set in jet. The dim outlines of the huge mountains which rise behind the harbor loomed through the darkness in the faint starlight. The Corcovada and the Gavea could be seen head and shoulders above the rest. Towards the open sea the black form of the Pao de Assacur, which guards the entrance of the harbor, stood like a solemn sentinel. Near it could be descried the glimmering of the lighthouses, far away at the heads. I paced the deck, trying to fight against a feeling of utter lassitude and depression. I had a terrible headache, a taste like blood in my mouth, and felt aching and feverish all over.

Presently the black cook, Jacob, came on the quarter-deck, and, touching his cap, said: "Please, sir, won't you come down and have some tea? It has been ready for half an hour."

"Thanks, Jacob—but how is Chips?"

His black face became grave at once as he replied: "Please, sir, he died nearly two hours ago, but I did not like to disturb you, so I laid him straight and still, tied a handkerchief round his poor, thin face, and came away softly and shut the door." Here the poor fellow's voice broke into a sob.

"Make the flag half-mast, Jacob."

"No good now, sir, they won't come off till daylight."

"Oh, yes, you are right, I forgot it was dark."

"But come and have something to eat, sir," persisted the faithful fellow. "You must be ready to drop."

"All right, Jacob, I will," I answered; and then, as I turned to go, I said: "Jacob, come aft and have your tea in the saloon. To-night we may as well keep each other's spirits up."

"Thank you, sir," he said, and disappeared.

After a little while, I went down into the saloon, and had the circumstances been different, I would have roared with laughter at the scene which met my eyes. Jacob had undergone quite a transformation, and how it was managed in the time, I was at a loss to guess. He was rigged out in his best suit, and in all the glory of a dress shirt of startling whiteness decorated with diamond studs. He had not seated himself until I arrived, and stood contemplating himself and his surroundings in the mirror over the side-board, his ebony countenance shining with ineffable satisfaction. All through the meal his look of self-satisfied importance amused me greatly; but when tea was over the old feeling of depression returned with renewed force. King Death reigned over the ship, and the majesty and terror of his presence were all around.

"Come into my cabin, Jacob," said I, "when you have cleared up, and we will have a smoke together."

He agreed, cheerfully, and I left the saloon. My cabin was under the break of the poop, and had a window looking right on the main deck, as well as the usual seaward port-hole. Before lighting my lamp I looked out at the quiet ship. The full tropical moon had risen while we were at our meal, and filled the deck and the rigging with her white radiance. About ten yards from the window stood the deck-house where the dead man was lying, and the moonlight glittered on its window and the brass work of the door. While I looked, I won-

dered: "Shall I die, too, during this awful visitation?" Then I thought I will just write directions as to what is to be done with my clothes and letters, now while I can.

I sat down at a small table at the other side of the cabin, kindled the little brass swing lamp and began to write. I had hardly begun when Jacob knocked at the door, and when I called advanced into the room pipe in hand. Asking him to sit down, I told him I would finish writing soon. He went over, and, sitting at the open window, commenced to smoke. The night was so utterly still that the scratching of my pen seemed loud and aggressive. Suddenly I was startled by Jacob's pipe going crash on the floor of the cabin, and looking at him I saw that his black face had become a light gray color, and that his eyes were starting out of his head. Before I could move or speak I heard the squeak of a door-handle softly turned. I crossed beside the negro, and gazed at the door of the house which contained the dead carpenter. As I looked my heart ceased to beat and my hair stood up. The door slowly opened, and out into the bright moonlight came the tall figure of the dead man! It seemed to pause and hesitate for a moment, and then advanced with muffled tread straight to the saloon entrance and my cabin. The moon shone full on the ghastly face, bound about with an old red handkerchief, from which the unclosed dead eyes shone as from under a cowl. On it came, nearer and nearer, while I remained frozen with horror. We heard the soft footstep approach the passage door, and then a heavy fall and all was still.

At that moment Jacob gave a fearful shriek and fainted. This brought me to my senses; and stepping over the prostrate black I seized the lamp and hurried out. There lay the ghastly figure across the doorway. I had not been dreaming then, and it was no fancy. I almost dropped the lamp in my renewed terror. But I braced myself together, and stooping over the body turned it on its back. As I did so a faint sigh came from the white lips. I was a man again, and roared: "Jacob, you idiot, come here; the carpenter is not dead at all."

Well, my story is out. We carried him back to bed and nursed him tenderly, and in the morning the doctor came, but we said nothing to him about the performance of the night before. The fact was, Jacob had mistaken the deadly trance of the yellow fever for actual death, and I, being so broken down with watching, had never questioned his statement.

Poor Chips had revived a little, and in the strength of delirium had wandered on deck; and so it all came about as I have told you. Would you believe it? That carpenter afterward recovered and is alive at the present day. The captain, too, got better. Neither Jacob nor I caught the fever, and not many weeks later we left that accursed place and were bowling along for dear old England. A soft, still night at sea like this always makes me think of that adventure, and I do not relish it even yet.

One—two, three—four, five—six, seven—rang out from the poop. The watch suddenly drops his musings and answers on the deep-toned fore-castle bell. I hop off the coil of rope, and remark:

"I say, Stevenson, your wretched story has given me cold shivers all down my back, and I shall have the nightmare every night for the next month. Let us go to the ladies on the quarter-deck and try to forget it."

He laughingly assents, and we throw down our cigars into the sea and join the merry crowd.

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